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THE FINE ARTS.




HISTORY  
OF  
SCULPTURE, PAINTING,  
AND  
ARCHITECTURE.

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BY J. S. MEMES, LL. D.

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TO  
THE VERY REVEREND  
WILLIAM JACK, D.D.  
PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY AND KING'S COLLEGE, ABERDEEN;  
IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF  
EARLY KINDNESS AND CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP,  
AND  
AS A SINCERE THOUGH INADEQUATE TRIBUTE  
OF MOST PROFOUND RESPECT  
FOR HIS  
VIRTUES, LEARNING, TALENTS, AND INTEGRITY,  
THIS VOLUME,  
WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE HIGHEST ESTEEM,  
IS INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.





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## PREFACE.

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THE present volume is offered to the public, under the impression that the general cultivation of practical taste, and an acquaintance with the principles of the Fine Arts, are not only desirable in the light of acquirement, but must eventually prove highly beneficial to the useful arts of the country, The subject, therefore, seemed peculiarly adapted to the very excellent Publication of which this forms a portion.\*

It is only bespeaking that share of confidence due, in the first instance, to opportunities of research, to state, that in the following pages not a single work of art is made the subject of criticism, the original of which the author has not seen and examined. Indeed, the substance of his remarks is generally transcribed from notes taken with the statue, or picture, or building, before him. The best authorities, also, have been consulted, and such as from their price or rarity are within reach of few readers. The historical details of Classic Art are chiefly the result of inquiries connected with a work on Grecian Literature, the composition of which has long engaged his hours of leisure.

J. S. M.

\* Constable's Miscellany.





## INTRODUCTION.

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TASTE is the perception of intellectual pleasure. Beauty, the object of taste and the source of this pleasure, is appreciated by the understanding, exercised, either upon the productions of art, or upon the works of nature. The term beauty, indeed, has appeared to admit a specific difference of import, according to the diversity of objects in which it may seem to reside, and the supposed variety of means through which it is perceived by the mind. This cause, more than any other, has tended to throw difficulty and inconclusive inference over every department of the subject. Yet, perhaps in all cases, most certainly in every instance of practical importance to our present purpose — elucidation of the Fine Arts, beauty will be found resolvable into some relation discerned and approved by the understanding. Hence the objects in which this relation exists impart pleasure to the mind, on the well known principles of its constitution.

But in all languages, the word beauty is applied to the results of those operations of the intellectual powers, which are not commonly recognised as appertaining to any province of taste. Thus we speak of the beauty of a theorem, of an invention, of a philosophical system or

discovery, as frequently, and with the same propriety, as of a picture or a group of statuary, of a landscape or a building. Correspondent to these objective modes of speech, we find, in every polished idiom, such causative forms as these — a taste for the mathematics, for mechanics, for philology, or science. Now, in these, and similar instances, in which a like manner of expression by the common sentiment of mankind, opposed to the opinion of certain writers, is rightly applied, relations furnishing the specific beauty of the subjects are perceived, and pleasurable emotions are excited. What then constitutes the essential difference between the beautiful in general language, and the beautiful in the fine arts? or, which is identical, the difference between the powers of judgment and of taste? Shall we say with some, that to decide on the relations of truth and falsehood, is the sole province of the judgment or understanding? But in the fine arts, to whose labours, taste, by these philosophers, is confined, truth is beauty, falsehood deformity; hence, to discriminate between even their minutest shades, requires the constant exercise of the most refined taste. Or, shall we maintain with others, that beauty consists in certain arrangements and proportions of the parts to a whole; or in the fitness of means to an end? This, as far as an intelligible description of beauty, applies equally to the pursuits of the philosopher and of the artist. Or, omitting almost innumerable minor theories, shall we say with the philosophy presently accepted, that beauty is something not intrinsic in the beautiful object, but dependent on associations awakened in the mind of the spectator? Without entering now into an examination of this important, because received opinion, we remark, that this definition of beauty, from its associated pleasures, is applicable alike to the deductions of science, to the exercises of imagination, and to

the disquisitions of taste. Indeed, as the discoveries of the philosopher, and the truths which he discloses, are both more abiding in their nature, and in their influence more universally important and interesting, it would follow, even on the system of association, that the beauty of scientific truth must be, at least, equally fruitful in pleasurable emotions, as the beauty of any one object in those pursuits to which this system has hitherto been restricted. And that such is actually the case, may be proved by an appeal to the writings and the annals of men of study. The law of gravitation, to take a familiar instance, possesses an essential principle of the beautiful — simplicity. Accordingly, to a mind of any refinement, the abstract contemplation of this theory will ever impart high delight. Yet, how imperfect is the pleasure, and even the beauty, till the mind associates with this simple law, that thereby worlds are governed in their course through boundless space; that by the same discovery, the future generations of rational and immortal beings will be directed in their most useful and loftiest speculations; and to all this magnificence of association, what tender sublimity will be added, by the thought, that the Supreme Father of all has graciously endowed his creatures with powers, and with permission, to discern the secondary laws by which infinite wisdom sees fit to rule in the visible creation!

Even the holier and lovelier sensibilities awakened by moral beauty, though certainly distinct in principle, are in their influence not easily separable from the pleasures of taste. At least, by the wise and gracious constitution of the human heart, the latter, when unallied with the former, necessarily remain imperfect. Our most exquisite enjoyments in literature and the fine arts will be found to arise from such performances as most directly remind us of virtuous associations; while, in the material world,

those scenes prove most delightful which call forth recollections of man's nobleness, or which elevate our contemplations to the power, and wisdom, and goodness of the Creator. In one important point, however, is at once discoverable the independent and higher principle of moral pleasure and beauty. The humble and pious mind may, often does, enjoy the most refined and mental gratification in the exercises of charity and devotion, while the intellectual resources or the adornments of taste are extremely circumscribed. How wise, how salutary, are these appointments ! The possessor of the most cultivated perceptions and extensive knowledge, thus feels, if he feel aright, that his acquirements render him only the more dependent upon religion and virtue for his best and purest enjoyments, as also for the dignified estimation of his pursuits. The unlettered but sincere Christian, again, thus knows that his heartfelt joys suffer not alloy from ignorance of this world's external culture. Both are thus equal ; yet each profits by his own peculiar good. The latter is secure against a deprivation imposed by temporal circumstances : the former is paid the toil and self-denial of attainment, by the increased manifestations he is thus enabled to discern of the charms of virtue, and the goodness of Omnipotence.

The presence and operation of taste can thus be traced in every act of the mind, and are intimately associated with the feelings of our moral nature. The exercises of taste have ever been regarded as productive generally of pleasurable emotion. Hence we consider ourselves justified in defining, at the beginning of this chapter, taste to be 'the perception of intellectual pleasure.' The common use of language, also — an authority always to be respected in tracing the extent or import of ideas — and even the best theories of taste, when rightly understood, coincide with this definition.



The various systems of taste, however apparently dissimilar, may be referred in principle to one or other of the two following : that this is an original and independent faculty ; or, that it may be resolved into a modification of the general powers of the mind. Of these opinions, the first has been, within the present century, satisfactorily proved utterly unphilosophical and inadequate to its purpose ; the second is preferable, but imperfect in the explications hitherto given, chiefly from three causes. First, writers have formed their conclusions from a consideration of the quality, in its full and complete exercise, instead of tracing the steps by which it is acquired or improved : secondly, this intellectual quality, even by the best writers, has been treated too much as an external sense — or it has been resolved into direct and inflex perceptions, and confounded with so many accidental feelings, that the inferences have been most perplexing and cumbrous : and, thirdly, the subject in general has been treated too metaphysically. Hence, however learned, or even abstractly just, the investigations may have been, they have exerted slight influence in establishing practice upon obvious and enlightened theory.

But declining to enter upon the exposure of what may be conceived former mistakes, we shall proceed briefly to explain our own views. Following out, then, the tenor of the preceding remarks, we conceive taste to be nothing more than a certain acuteness, which necessarily is acquired by, and always accompanies, the frequent exercise of the powers of understanding in any one given pursuit. It seems to differ from mere knowledge, in being attended by a love or desire of the the particular exercise. This desire, whether it precedes or follows acquirement, is easily accounted for, in the one case, as an agreeable anticipation of advantage to be gained, and in the other as a mental habitude ; or it is frequently cherished from im-

pressions received at an age too early for notice. The gratification of this desire, exclusive even of the enjoyment received from the successful exercise of the mental powers, sufficiently explains the origin of the pleasures of taste.

This view of taste, as applicable to, and indeed resulting from, training of the understanding in all dignified pursuits, is agreeable, as already shown, to common feeling and common language. But in deference to the same authorities, it is necessary to limit the idea to a restricted, that is, a proper sense of the word. Hence we have said that the object of taste is beauty, as perceivable in the works of nature and art: thus confining its province to literature and the fine arts, which reflect nature either by direct imitation, or by more remote association.

In the present volume, the subject is limited, of course, to the arts of design; but the principles now expounded are conversant with every varied application of taste: And we have pursued this extent of illustration throughout the whole powers of the mind, in order to ground, on the broadest basis, this practical precept, that taste, like the powers of judgment and understanding, of which, in fact, it is only a modification, can be improved, or, we venture to say, acquired in any useful degree, only by patient cultivation, and well-directed study of the particular subject. The opinion opposite to this has been productive of the worst effects, both in the practice and patronage of the arts. It not unfrequently has led artists into irregular, and even unnatural compositions; but its greatest evils do daily arise from those, whose previous habits and attainments by no means qualify them for judges, confidently pronouncing upon works of art, from what they are pleased to term a natural taste. This, if it means any thing, must imply an untutored, and therefore, imperfect taste. We would be

understood here, not as advocating a conventional criticism, but as maintaining, that the higher beauties, and nobler principles of art, can be appreciated only by those whose taste has been cultivated by profound study and knowledge of these principles. One class of effects in an imitative art is, doubtless, to produce sensations which can be immediately compared with the more obvious effects and appearances of nature. Of these every one can judge, whether the effect be actually produced or not. This, however, though a primary, is the lowest object of the artist. The dignity, too, and comparative value, of these effects, can be estimated only by a mind generally cultivated; while the propriety of the means employed, and their agreement with the modes of art, the higher beauties of execution, the intelligence of style, the just character of the performance as a work of peculiar talents, can be sanctioned by canons of judgment familiar only to those who have made the subject a regular study. In this we require nothing more for the sculptor and the painter than is demanded, and rightly too, in favour of the poet and the orator.

From these observations, founded, as they are, on experience, follows as a corollary the truth of the previous definition, that, in the fine arts, beauty is always resolvable into some effect or relation discerned and approved by the understanding. For since it has been shown that taste is but another name for intellectual cultivation and knowledge in a given pursuit, the perception of beauty, which forms the peculiar object of taste, must ultimately be referred to the understanding. Now, in an imitative art, there can be only one relation, namely, truth, which thus becomes both the source and the criterion of beauty. This truth, however, admits of two specific distinctions; or at least respects two separate objects, as the production is



compared with nature, the archetype imitated ; and with the principles of the art, or peculiar mode of imitation. In the one case, there is the relation of resemblance ; in the other, that of consistency. These, in their infinitely various combinations and modified excellences, still recur to one and the same simple law of the beautiful—veracity.

The general spirit and tendency of these remarks bear directly on the question regarding a standard of taste. Both parties here, in pertinaciously adhering to their opinion, are wrong. There is, and there is not, a standard ; meaning, by this term, a permanent rule of taste beyond which human invention or genius shall never pass. At the same time, if there be no stable and unerring principles of judgment, there can be neither merit nor moral dignity, beauty nor truth, in the works of the most gifted mind. How, then, are facts seemingly so discordant to be reconciled ? We have already adverted to the radical error in all cases of disregarding, and in some instances of treating with scorn, the idea of a gradual and laborious acquirement of taste. This, however, will be found the only idea of the subject truly useful in a practical view, as well as the sole ground of consistent and rational theory. Taste is not only progressive, but inductive ; it is, in fact, the result of a series of experiments whose object is beauty. As in every other species of experimental knowledge, then, the standard of excellence must vary in different ages according to their lights and their refinement. In the progress of individual genius this succession is very remarkable, the objects and nature of its aims changing with, and indeed indicating, attainment. It is thus clear that taste, whether nationally or individually considered, must vary in its models, and in their standards, according to the existing state of knowledge ; for, in departing from received precepts, men are

guided by the hope of reaching higher perfection, or of exhibiting novelty of invention. If such tentative measures succeed, the general standard is so far elevated; when they fail, though the advance of real improvement may be impeded for a season, established modes more firmly recover their authority. But again, as in every species of experimental science, those researches, in their practice the most carefully conducted, and in their inferences the most consistent, are regarded as the canons of scientific truth; so in the liberal arts, those noble monuments which, during the longest period, and to the greatest number of competent judges, have yielded the most satisfaction, are justly esteemed standards of taste — rules by which other works are to be tried. Such standards, or final experiments, in the science of taste, are fortunately possessed in the literary compositions, and in the remains of the sculpture and architecture of antiquity; as also in the labours of those moderns who have emulated the teachers of the olden time. These accredited relics of genius obtain a deserved and venerable mastery over future aspirings, first, from their own inborn excellence; secondly, from the effects of that excellence in a continually increasing influence over association and feeling. Imagination thus combines with reason in hallowing both the original cause and the attendant influence into precepts of an immutable authority, consecrated by the suffrages of the wise and the refined of every later age. Reason, however, first established, and subsequently demonstrates, the principles upon which this standard has become unchanged and unchangable; namely, perfect simplicity in the means, and perfect truth in the results, through all their varied combinations.

Consideration even of the vicissitudes and revolutions in taste seems farther to confirm these general views.

Opinion, indeed, has vacillated in the estimation of elegance ; but, as in the constantly returning eccentricities of a planetary body, some secret power has maintained certain limits to these changes, and round certain principles, though at times obscured, art has continued to revolve. Now these checks to barbarous novelty and innovation, have been derived from the not-altogether-forgotten remembrance of admitted standards, or from the natural effects upon which these have been founded. The temporary derelictions of good taste have ever occurred in the most ignorant ages, and in extent as in duration have corresponded with the intellectual darkness of the period ; the returning light of knowledge has in this respect also invariably dispelled error, afresh disclosing the pristine beauty of the ancient models, and recalling the judgment to the rectitude of those precepts on which they are composed. Even the tyranny of fashion and the inveteracy of prejudice yield before the majesty of antique excellence, or produce a passing absurdity adopted for a day, to be forever forgotten. Surely, then, there must be in these abiding modes in literature and art, as likewise in that science of taste which appreciates and determines their canons, a beauty — an excellence, the offspring and the object of truth and reason — and like these, ever consistent, immutable, imperishable.

To the doctrines now advocated it furnishes no objection, that mankind do not agree in the same estimate of beauty, nor even that objects entirely different in their qualities, are assumed as beautiful. This fact, indeed, has often and triumphantly been adduced as conclusive in favour of the sceptical position regarding a standard of taste. Those writers, again, who support the opposite opinion, seem too readily to have admitted difficulty in repelling the objection. The truth is, it can be obviated

only on the principle which we have endeavoured to establish; namely, that taste is the certain result of intellectual cultivation in the proper province, that it is consequently commensurate with the degree of intelligence, and always an object of truth and reason. Now, the diversity so much insisted upon, is capable not only of being thus easily accounted for, but is to be expected as the necessary effect of varied extent of knowledge. The very objection predetermines, that among the rudest people, ideas and perceptions of something termed beauty are entertained. Does not this establish the existence of taste coeval with the earliest traces of information? True, the beauty admired by the African or the Esquimaux differs from that which awakens the sensibility of the European,—but so also are their means and capabilities of judging unequal. It is not, therefore, diversity, but inconsistency of judgment, that in this case can prove the absence of all fixed principles of decision. Now, we will venture to affirm, without fear of contradiction, that there is no inconsistency nor opposition; and that the most polished inhabitant of Europe, proceeding upon the same premises as the wildest in-dweller of the desert or savannah, will arrive at exactly the same conclusion. The sable virgin, for instance, whose charms are acknowledged by the rude warriors of her tribe, will also, by the refined European, be admitted among the fairest examples of native beauty. Hence it is evident that all men acknowledge a standard of taste, founded on similar reasonings and accordant feelings of the human heart, though the final expression of this standard, or the degree of refinement whence it is deduced, will necessarily be modified by moral and physical circumstances, and by the light enjoyed.



The questions we have now laboured to resolve, are by no means to be regarded as mere problems in abstract speculation. The subject is of the highest practical importance, and we have attempted to reduce it to practical inferences. Nothing has tended more to retard improvement, than placing genius and taste in opposition to reason and application. Each of the two former has been invested with some untangible, undefined excellence, disdaining rule, and superior to the drudgery of study. In treating of both, authors appear to have aimed at exalting their theme, by refusing certainty to the operations of the one, and stability to the principles of the other; treating each as the empiricism of talent, which it would be as vain to attempt reducing to precept as to prescribe the eagle's path through heaven. But how does this accord with fact and with usefulness? Men, the most eminent for genius, and who have bequeathed to futurity the most perfect productions, have also been the most remarkable for assiduity. This industry has been directed as much to the study of principles and rules as to the creation of new works. We have shown that there are standards, or rules, of taste, which never can be disregarded save at the peril of absurdity. If we deny regularity and certainty, or fixed and rational precepts of criticism to the labours of genius, of what advantage to succeeding knowledge can these prove? Beyond a passing pleasure — a barren sentiment, they remain without fruit. Excellence in the most refined exercises of mind is degraded to a mere knack,—to a fortunate and inexplicable aptitude. Thus, not the improvement of the human race only, but the very continuance of acquirement among men, is rendered uncertain. Yet such are the consequences of every system which considers taste as different from, and independent of knowledge; or its precepts as mutable, and not

more amenable to judgment than to imagination. In whatever light, then, the views now briefly proposed be regarded, whether as respects taste as an object of mental science, or as the improver of art; whether in its influence upon the understanding or the heart, they appear to promise the surest, the most practical, and the most dignified results.

Beauty, as already observed, is the object of taste. The primitive source, and, in a great measure, the ultimate and only criterion, of this beauty, is nature. For, in the arts over which taste presides, natural beauty receives new modifications, and is subjected to new laws. Yet, in their general tendency and design, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, and even music, all contemplate one end,—to awaken associated emotion; while each employs the same means of direct or less obvious imitation of nature.

In each of these arts, however, a distinction exists, both in the manner and in the extent of instruction. They differ also in the closeness with which the respective imitations reflect their natural archetypes. But in this they correspond, that in none is mere imitation the final, or most exalted, object of the artist. In the fidelity of representation, and in the facility with which the originals in nature may be traced, Sculpture and Painting are superior to all the other imitative arts. Between the vivid creations of these, and the more varied, more imaginative, but less defined, efforts of poetry, the middle rank is occupied by Architecture, whose mighty masses and harmonious proportions fill the mind with awe or delight, as they recall the majesty or grace of the material world.

Architecture thus stands alone, in its own principles, and, it may be, in its own pre-eminence. These principles are at once more profound, or at least more abstract,

and yet more determinate, than those of either of the sister arts. Indeed, so remarkable is this fact, and so nearly do the limits and the constituents of beauty verge here on demonstrative science, that we may hereafter point out their connexion with some of the preceding doctrines of taste. In the meantime, it may be sufficient merely to mention, that though architecture, as a necessary knowledge, must have been practised from the earliest formation of society; and though it furnishes their principal field to the other arts; yet it was later in arriving at perfection than Sculpture, which, besides, affords a more continuous series of monuments, and supplies the best materials for the philosophy of the subject; and in other respects, the arrangement now selected seems to promise the most clear elucidation of the history of art.



# THE FINE ARTS.

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## SCULPTURE.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE representation of external forms by their tangible properties, in actual or proportional magnitude, seems the most obvious, as it is the simplest, mode of imitation. Sculpture, therefore, of all the imitative arts, probably first exercised the ingenuity of mankind. Even now, we remark that the rude carvings on the spear-shaft or canoe of the savage warrior surpass other exhibitions of his skill, and might more readily be exalted into tasteful decorations. Hence, in tracing the history of an art which thus appears almost coeval with the earliest formation of society, the chronology of those ancient empires in which it chiefly flourished, will supply an arrangement best adapted to the explanation of the subject.

Regarding the origin of sculptural design, indeed, much has been written, and many theories proposed, each asserting, for some favorite people, the praise of invention. All the kindred arts, however, with which taste and feeling are conversant, have their birth and subsequent im-

provement, in the same universal principles of the human mind. Principles which mysteriously, yet powerfully, and doubtless for the accomplishment of the wisest ends, connect man with that nature amidst whose haunts he is destined to dwell — which awaken his untutored enthusiasm to her beauties, and unite his individual sympathies, as his social remembrances, with her hallowed associations. It is thus that human action and human suffering find their earliest records in the scenes where the events were transacted. The conflict long continues to revive on its heath; the memory of the chief appropriates the lone vale where he sleeps; woods, mountains, streams, become the representatives of supernatural beings — beneficent or vindictive — as sensations of beauty or of awe are called forth in the mortal breast. The succeeding step is easy to the erection of less durable but more particular memorials. Piety — true in sentiment, false in means — patriotism, friendship, gratitude, admiration, leave the successive impress of their influence, according to the accessions of intelligence, on the ‘grey stone’ — the rude column — the dressed altar — the visible shape — the perfect statue. How beautiful, then, yet how true, the allegory of Grecian poetry, which feigns that love, or the natural affections, taught man the arts of genius!

The gradations, also, from uninformed art to some degree of refined invention, will present, even among distant nations, little of diversified character. In the infancy of society, men in all countries closely resemble each other, in their feelings, in their wants, in their means of gratification, and improvement. Hence, in the fine arts, which at first among every people minister, with similar resources, to the same natural desires, or mental affections, resemblance of style ought not to be assumed as evidence of continuous imitation from a common origin. Early Egypt-

tian and Grecian statues exhibit almost identical lineaments, and even corresponding attitude; simply, because each had to surmount the same difficulties with nearly equal information.

The tendency of these remarks, especially applicable to sculpture, sufficiently proves that no reliance is to be placed on any theories of its exclusive discovery. Such opinions, however profound they may appear, are in reality the substitution of a partial view of facts, when a general law of our nature is within reach. In treating of the ancient history of sculpture, then, the legitimate objects of inquiry are, its progress, character, and degree of perfection among the different nations of antiquity. But though no claims of any single nation to have imparted the skill to others can be conceded, a very wide disparity of merit is observable, both in the final excellence attained by one people, as respects the relative acquirements of another; and likewise points of equal advance being assumed, the times past in realising this similar improvement are found to be very unequal. These facts, here most easily distinguishable, are pregnant with importance, and invest the history of this art with much of dignity and solemn interest, exhibiting the striking connexion between the intellectual and the political and moral condition of man. The diversity, in truth, is the visible impress which legislation has stamped upon human genius.

Egypt has been styled the cradle of the arts; and, waiving the examination of all disputes as to priority, we prefer commencing with the history of Egyptian sculpture, since its authentic monuments carry us up to a very early date, — are numerous, — and especially, because they tend to unite the scattered lights which doubtful tradition flings over the less perfect remains of Asiatic ingenuity.

In pursuing this investigation, we shall observe the following arrangement of the subject.

Era of original, or native Sculpture.

Era of mixed, or Greco-Egyptian Sculpture.

Era of imitative Sculpture, improperly denominated Egyptian.

The first or true age of Sculpture in Egypt, ascends from the invasion of Cambyzes to unknown antiquity. During this period only were primitive institutions in full vigour and integrity, and public works, reflecting national taste, conducted by national talent. The two remaining eras, extending downwards through the successive dominion of the Greeks and Romans, have been added, in order to embrace the consideration of topics, which, though remotely connected therewith, have hitherto been regarded as integral parts of the subject. In examining the principles and character of this aboriginal school, there are still left two sources of judging, with sufficient accuracy, the merits of its production, — vestiges of ancient grandeur yet existing on their native site — and the numerous specimens in European cabinets. These remains may be classed under the three following divisions.

Colossal statues.

Groups or single figures about the natural size.

Hieroglyphical and historical relievos.

In the formation of these various labours, four kinds of materials are employed: one soft, a species of sandstone; and three very hard, a calcareous rock, out of which the tombs, with their sculptures, are hewn; basalt or trap, of various shades, from black to dark grey, the constituent generally of the smaller statues; granite, more commonly of the description named by mineralogists *granites rubescens*,



of a warm reddish hue, with large crystals of feld-spar; or it is sometimes, though rarely, of a dark red ground, with black specks, as in the magnificent head, mis-named of Memnon, now in the British Museum. Colossal figures are uniformly of granite, in which also is a large portion of the relievos. Besides these, from the account of Herodotus, as also from the statues of wood actually discovered by modern travellers, we learn that even in great works, the Egyptian sculptors were accustomed to exercise their skill on that less stubborn material. Metal appears to have been sparingly used; at least, only very small figures have yet been found of a composition similar to the bronze of later times. Yet the book of Job especially, and other parts of Scripture, would induce the conclusion, that even colossal figures were, from an early period, cast of metal. In the tombs, as those near Thebes, small images of porcelain and terra cotta are likewise frequent.

I. The number of colossal statues in ancient Egypt, as described by the writers of Greece, would appear incredible, especially when we consider the magnitude of some, and the materials of all, if these early descriptions were not, at the present day, authenticated by countless remains. Yet, than a statue of granite sixty or seventy feet high, there is not, perhaps, one instance more striking, of disregard of time, and patience of toil. Of these mighty labours, some are hewn from the living rock, and left adhering to the natural bed; as the celebrated Sphinx, near the pyramids of Ghizeh, and various sculptures on the rocks of the Thebaid, which look the shadows of giants cast by a declining sun. Others again, as in some of the figures in the Memnonium, appear to have been built; most probably reared first of square blocks, and afterwards fashioned into shape. The greater part, however, are composed of one block, raised in the granite quarries of Upper Egypt, and

transported to their destined situation by the waters of the Nile. Of these works, Herodotus, to whose veracity almost every new discovery in these countries adds fresh credibility, saw and has described many, some of which can be identified at the present day, and others, a labour of not many hours promises to bring to light. The dimensions of those actually enumerated, extend from twelve to seventy cubits in height. Some are figures of men; others of animals, chiefly of the Sphynx. These latter appear to have been in considerable numbers, usually ranged in corresponding lines on the opposite side of the approach to the great temples. Of the human colossi, again, some were isolated, and were probably objects of worship; others were merely ornaments, chiefly employed as columns, as in the famous Propylæon of the Temple of Vulcan, ascribed to Psammetichus, and erected at Memphis. Of the unattached figures, the attitude appears to have exhibited but little action; the posture apparently various, though seldom erect. One is described as recumbent, seventy cubits long, accompanied by two smaller, standing one at each extremity. The largest statues now known, namely, two in the Memnonium at Thebes, are both in a sitting posture. All these works, even the columnar statues, seem to have been connected with religious rites or symbols. This, together with imperfect science, accounts for the striking similarity discoverable in a class, the individuals of which are thus varied, at least in purpose and magnitude. Another peculiarity is, that in Egyptian sculpture, whenever the dimensions are much beyond nature, the head is always larger than even colossal proportions would require. It would be unreasonable to ascribe to ignorance a practice thus universal; it is to be attributed rather to mistaken principle, in order to render the features more conspicuous, when removed to a distance from the eye.

Where similar character and design thus pervade the whole class, minuteness of individual description is unnecessary; we may, however, merely refer, as examples best known, to the two Theban colossi already noticed, one of which, from inscriptions still legible, would appear to be the famous sounding statue of Memnon. In each of these figures, exclusive of the lower plinth of the throne, the altitude is fifty feet, the material red granite, and the positions alike — namely, seated, the head looking straight in front, arms close pressed to the sides, palms and forearm extended and resting upon the thighs, lower extremities perpendicular and apart. This posture, which may be described as characteristic of the entire class, is little calculated to convey any sentiment of ease or grace. Yet in these vast, although comparatively uninformed labours, we discover more of the sublime than arises from mere vastness, or even from the recollections of distant time with which their memory is associated. They are invested with a majestic repose — with a grand and solemn tranquillity, which awes without astonishing; and while they exhibit the greatest perfection to which Egyptian art has attained, in colossal statues generally, we discover occasional approaches to truth and nature, with no inconsiderable feeling of the sweet, the unaffected, and the flowing in expression and contour.

II. To the second class belong both the earliest and the latest works of the Egyptian chisel; yet between the worst and the best, is not to be perceived a diversity of merit corresponding to the lapse of time — a certain proof, that the principles of the art were fixed at an early period of its progress, and on grounds independent of its precepts. The first essays in sculpture in Egypt, seem to have been made upon the living rock, in the process of excavating artificial or enlarging natural caverns for the purposes of

habitation or devotion, and at every period in Eastern history of sepulture. Statues thus formed, would, from the mode of their formation, not much exceed the natural size; and being afterwards detached when finished, were transferred to other situations. In imitation of these, statues were subsequently hewn, in what became the ordinary manner, from detached blocks. It is not here implied, that these two methods can be distinctly traced in their separate applications, nor that the one was superseded by the other; but simply, that the state of knowledge, and the habits of the people, render very probable the priority of the former. Hence appears an explanation of a singular fact in the history of the art, which has been the subject of much discussion. In every specimen, without exception, which can be ranked as Egyptian, a pilaster runs up the back of the figure, in whatever attitude it may be represented. The origin of a practice not natural, in an art professing to imitate nature, must be sought in some external circumstance of its early history. Now, such circumstance seems plainly discernible in works still remaining, in the excavations of Philoe, Elephantis, Silsilis, and at El Malook, in the tombs of the Theban kings. In these monuments, which are often suites of magnificent chambers hewn from the hard and white calcareous rock, numerous and beautiful remains of sculpture are preserved. These ornaments vary from simple relievos to complete statues. In the latter, the figure is never entirely detached, when placed on the surface of the wall, a posterior portion being always left adhering; while, if formed by cutting round to a recess, a pilaster behind runs up the whole height, evidently with the original view of increasing strength or of saving labour, or from certain religious notions. Subsequently, in detached statues wrought out of blocks from the same, or in part the same motives, and also in order to obtain a surface for the



inscription of hieroglyphics, the aboriginal pillar was retained. Generally speaking, the workmanship here is inferior to the details of the colossal figures, although some of the finest specimens belong to this second division. The varieties, however, cannot be referred to any regular gradations of improvement, nor determinate epochs of style, as sometimes attempted. They are the result solely of individual skill in the artists, and of the views, opulence, or purposes of their employers. This difference, also, extends only to the minor details of execution; in the more intellectual principles of art, all are nearly on an equality. Even the design and attitudes are wonderfully limited, the sameness being more uniform than could have been produced, except by the operation of prescriptive rules and fixed models of imitation.

In many of the ancient Egyptian buidings, the whole of the exterior is frequently covered with relievos. This profusion, for the purpose, too, of mere decoration, together with the indefinite nature of hieroglyphical delineation, operated strongly against improvement in this particular province. Indeed, the prejudicial effects arising from an embellishment, in which extent more than intrinsic beauty was regarded, and where arbitrary forms, or mere indications of known objects, precluded all natural imitation, and all delicacy of expression, infected the whole of the art. The general inferiority in works of this third class, is, however, to be understood with due limitation. In relievos, consisting of few figures, sepulchral ones for instance, which in the same piece rarely contain more than three, are often displayed no mean beauties both of execution and of character. In historical relievos, again, which occupy entire walls of the temples, crowded as they are with figures in various actions, processions, battles, sieges, and represented by artists who apparently possessed

no principles of design, save a knowledge of simple form in its most restricted movements, all is feebleness, puerility, and confusion. Or if beauty occasionally break forth, it is in some single reposing figure, or in the patient details of execution. In the drawing and anatomy, singular ignorance is manifested; the limbs are without joints, and the movements exhibit neither balance nor spring; proportion and perspective seem to have been utterly unknown. Military engines, buildings, horses, soldiers, all appear of the same dimensions, and all equally near the eye. The hero in all these monuments bears a strong individual resemblance; he is represented ever victorious, in the bloom of youth, and in his figure are sometimes displayed both grandeur and beauty of conception, when considered apart. But these separate excellences are completely obscured by the absurdity of representing him at least double the stature of his followers or opponents. The circumstance of thus confounding moral greatness with physical magnitude, were alone sufficient to mark the infancy of invention, and the barbarism of taste. It is nevertheless only justice to mention, that occasionally, in the historical reliefs, we observe rudiments of higher art, with less of convention, and more of freedom of imagination, than in any other Egyptian sculptures.

The praises bestowed upon the hieroglyphics of Egypt by Winkelman and others, must be restricted to the mere workmanship; and even then, are exaggerated or misplaced. Considered as works of art, if indeed they can be elevated to that rank, they will be found entirely destitute of accurate discrimination of form, and are more properly conventional representations, dependent upon modes and principles at once limited and arbitrary. These labours, the probable records of primitive history, and of earliest superstition, are of different kinds. The

first in use, though not afterwards superseded, were anaglyphics, in which objects are represented by a simple outline, often traced to the depth of several inches. An obvious improvement upon this was to round the angles, and to relieve the figures upon themselves; a mode which very generally obtains. To this manner much ingenuity and forethought has inconsiderately been ascribed, as if adopted against the attacks of time, and to cast a deeper shadow on the symbols. It is, on the contrary, to be judged merely as the resource of an imperfect art. A third, but comparatively rare method, was to elevate the contour, by reducing the surface both within and without. The last and most laborious plan, was to remove the ground entirely, leaving the figures in proper relief. This, the true relievo, was unknown to or unpractised in the ancient arts of Egypt. Even the historical and monumental sculptures just described, partake more of the anaglyphical than of the elevated relievo. Indeed every specimen of this latter is to be assigned to a later period than the first and genuine age. By attending to this, and to the costume of the figures in the most ancient works, data of importance might be discovered, throwing valuable light on the eras of Egypt's mysterious monuments.

The expression, mixed art, selected to discriminate the second epoch, has been adopted, to mark the successive changes in the ancient modes induced by the Persians and the Greeks. The influence exerted upon art by the dominion of the former, amounted merely to a negative,—to the prohibition of its exercise; which, with the destruction of many of its best monuments, produced a deterioration in the few and feeble attempts during the latter years of that dynasty. Mythraism, in which elemental fire was the symbol of the Deity, proscribed the imitative arts in that service, whence, in all other countries, they

have sprung. The Persians, says the father of history, have neither temples nor statues. Or, if architecture was encouraged by these conquerors, evidence still remains that their erections were but modifications of materials torn from the mighty structures of past ages. In little more than a century and a half, the Persian was subverted by the Macedonian empire. Yet even in Alexander, the ancient and native arts of Egypt obtained not a patron. The majestic range of temples, palaces, and cities, which bordered the sacred stream of the Nile, furnished so many quarries, of tempting access, whence Alexandria was reared; and the mightiest, as well as most rational trophy of Grecian superiority, received its grandest and most enduring monuments from the stupendous labours of the first age. His successors followed the example; and although, under them, the polished literature of Greece, united with her own subtile philosophy, constituted Alexandria the Athens of the East, yet in sculpture, in architecture, and in religion, to which both were subordinate, the character remained essentially Egyptian, but with certain deviations and additions.

The Roman dominion finally introduced new modifications, or rather mutations, of the ancient art. This epoch may be considered as commencing with the introduction of the Isiac mysteries at Rome; although the principal features by which, as a division in the history of art, it is distinguished, are not decidedly marked prior to the reign of Hadrian. The works of the third, or imitative era, have, in strict propriety, no real connexion with Egyptian sculpture, farther than as it multiplied copies of the ancient forms, with occasional accessions of elegance. During a residence of two years in the East, and by the deification there of his favorite Antinous, Hadrian imbibed a fondness for the arts, and particularly for the statuary of



Egypt. But the works which he commanded were in all respects Roman, or rather Grecian, under Egyptian modes. They were indeed most scrupulously modelled after the most ancient and authentic specimens; even the materials were brought from the native quarries, but the sculptors were Greeks or Italians; and the Grecian character of design is visible in every remaining specimen, the merits of which require notice. Nothing, therefore, can be more futile, than from the works of this age to infer the merits or principles of native and ancient art. So far, indeed, does our scepticism here extend, that we doubt if a single statue of genuine and ancient Egyptian workmanship is to be found among the numbers that have been discovered in Italy, and with which Hadrian filled that portion of the empire.

The general conclusion, then, from these remarks, is, that there is but one period of real Egyptian sculpture, and that the genius and character of this indigenous and aboriginal art is to be discovered only in the most ancient monuments, having suffered various changes under the Greeks and under the Romans. In establishing this inference, we have not been guided by the often fanciful, always deceitful, analogies discoverable in the fluctuating style and varying productions of imitation, but have viewed these as directed by the steady operation of the laws and institutions of society, which govern the spirit and tendency of the arts themselves. During an interval of nearly twenty centuries previous to the era of Alexander, though diligently cultivated, sculpture had hardly attained any of the nobler qualities of invention. The system of taste and of government was in fact hostile to improvement in this art beyond a certain limit, or upon any principles, save those fixed on the very threshold of knowledge. The national polity, which will ever be found to guide the

national taste, induced a preference of the immense and the durable ; hence the grandeur of Egyptian architecture : but in statuary, such a character of design necessarily produced figures rigid and motionless. The essential elements of the grand and the beautiful — breadth and simplicity, are indeed present, but the effect is rarely elicited. The simple is seldom inspired by any feeling of the true, the natural, or the graceful ; breadth, unrelieved by symmetry of parts, or expression of details, degenerates into inert magnitude. The colossal forms are the records only of power, of patience, and of labour ; not the creations of intelligence and of genius. Sculpture also suffered from peculiar obstacles to its progress. Exclusively attached to the service of religion, its representations were confined to divinities, priests, and kings ; personages whose modes and lineaments were unalterably fixed — fixed, too, from types, frequently of the most hideous description, at least ill managed, and little adapted to the objects or spirit of the art. This religion likewise admitted no images of human virtue or sympathy to mingle with its cold obstructions ; thus denying to the Egyptian arts a source, which, to those of Greece, proved one of the richest and sweetest veins of ideal composition. The artist, therefore, even had he been allowed to depart from established but imperfect models, possessed no ennobling source whence to create new models of beauty or of grandeur. Imagination wanted materials, which neither the prescribed subject nor living nature, under these restrictions, could supply. Again, sculpture not only laboured under the general disadvantage of hereditary and unchanging professions ; a national regulation which repressed every fortunate predilection of genius, but as a security against the possibility of innovation, slaves, educated under the immediate care of the priests, were entrusted with the exe-



cution of the most sacred, and, consequently, most important monuments.

In Egyptian sculpture, thus properly understood, little will be discovered of that excellence which has been attributed to its remains. Still there are to be found some first principles of true science ; and these are occasionally developed with considerable beauty of detail ; always with patient, but inefficient technicality. It is by no means apparent, however, that by the masters of these early ages any theory was observed ; certainly the occasional refinement seems rather the result of accident or of individual superiority, than of systematic perceptions, or of transmitted precept. Their best statues have an elevation of seven hands and a half, being divided equally, the torso and limbs having the same length. These proportions are pleasing, and borrowed directly from nature ; but they show nothing of that characteristic beauty of physical art, which, in the varied harmony of parts, indicates the capabilities of form. A similar principle regulates the details, which, though brought out with considerable propriety and softness, are yet without precision or anatomical knowledge, especially of internal structure, — the heads of the bones, the insertions and terminations of the muscles, never being correctly indicated. Hence the forms appear coarse and inelegant, the limbs heavy and inert, because without vigorous marking on the joints, where the deeper depressions only and the strongest projections are aimed at, not feelingly touched. The attitude, also, is constantly rectilinear, denoting that condition of the art when poverty of source limits its reach of the beautiful by the difficulties of execution. It is, in fact, the first choice of invention rendered permanent by prescriptive institutions. From the curve being thus unknown in the contour, the action is necessarily angular in its direction,

unless the movement be parallel to the gravitating line of the figure. Hence the range of action and of attitude is very circumscribed; the arms either hanging close by the sides or crossed at right angles on the breast; or, as a slight variation, one is placed in each posture. Lateral movements in like manner are limited, the statue standing equally poised on both limbs, the feet not exactly opposite, one being in advance, often almost in front of the other. Whether erect, sitting, or kneeling, the action is the same: hence, little of grace or animation of movement is to be found even in the most perfect works; yet there is often to be remarked a grave and staid serenity, neither unpleasing nor devoid of interest. As in the selection of attitude, however, the artist has been guided, not by the beautiful, but by his own timidity and confined resources; so in expression, little beyond a vague and general emotion has been attempted; seldom more, indeed, than might be produced by the symmetrical arrangement of the features. These are flat, the countenance being Ethiopian, and are just sufficiently distinguished for the effect of separation; the depth of shadow is wanting to give contrast and firmness. The eyes, whether long and narrow, the peculiar characteristic of the earliest era, or more full and open, as in the Greco-Egyptian period, are nearly on the general level of the face; the nose is broad and depressed, the lips thick, and always sharp on the outer edge, though often touched with great softness and delicacy; the cheeks, chin, and ears, are large, ill made out, and without feeling. Hence, although the heads are often finished with wonderful labour, the effect is always feeble, while the whole is uniformly surmounted by harsh and disproportionate masses of drapery, overpowering the already too weak expression. The superior beauty of some of the colossal busts may perhaps be rightly attributed to their having been executed as

portraits. Conventional art, even in the most skilful hands, is rarely pleasing; nature, even rudely imitated, is ever viewed with a degree of pleasure.

On the methods employed to work materials so unyielding as those of the Egyptian sculptors, it is difficult to propose any decided opinion. On their porphyry, granite, and basalt, modern tools can hardly make impression; yet are the forms, in all instances, highly finished, with angles sharp and unbroken. The latter circumstance, indeed, constitutes a peculiar feature in the works of this country as distinguished from Oriental art generally, which, together with breadth and simplicity, brings them nearest the productions of the Grecian chisel. From the style of execution, however, it would appear that the effect has been brought out rather by patience and labour, than by rapid or dexterous management. In fact, the general character has been influenced not a little by the materials; for in the statues of wood, both as described and discovered, the action is bolder, and the manner more free. If a conjecture may be hazarded on the subject of their theory, it would seem that the Egyptians, in the infancy of their arts, were guided by an outline traced round a human figure, dead or alive, extended upon the block, face upwards, with the arms close by the sides, and the limbs placed together exactly as their statues are composed. The scattered details given in the Greek writers respecting the arts of this ancient people, have indeed induced the belief, that they were acquainted with much more refined canons of symmetry; but it ought to have been observed, that Diodorus and others describe the practices existing in their own times, when Egypt had, to a certain extent, become the pupil of Greece. In some respects, also, it is difficult to give implicit credit to their accounts, at least in the common interpretation. It is farther par-

ticularly to be observed, that the supposition now made will account for the correctness of the general proportions which would thus be obtained from nature ; likewise no theory of proportional parts can be detected different from the results thus obtainable, while those details which a refined theory would preserve, but which could not by such method be measured, are defective.

We have been thus minute and critical in these investigations for two reasons : from Egypt certainly descended the first principles of improvement to Western art, while no less evidently did the Eastern world derive its entire knowledge from the same source. Consequently, in carefully examining that of the Egyptians, the best account, deduced too from monuments actually observed, has been given of Oriental Sculpture generally. Of the mighty empires, indeed, which once embraced the happiest regions of Asia and of the globe, a name, or at most a shapeless mass of ruins, alone remain. Of Jewish art, the sole memorials in existence are the sculptured transcripts on the arch of Titus. But every description in the sacred records, from the calf of the wilderness to the twelve oxen of the molten sea, or the lions of the throne of Solomon, evinces the taste of the former bondsmen of Pharaoh, and of him who was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians ; at the same time we learn that the Israelites quickly departed from the severe and simple grandeur of the parent source. Moving eastward : Baalbec's gigantic masonry is adorned with little of sculpture ; the lonely Palmyra exhibits only Roman ruins, for the Tadmor of Scripture has long disappeared ; the pillared Persepolis claims a remoter antiquity ; but the Pelhavi and arrow-headed inscriptions, instead of hieroglyphics, show comparatively recent, and the innumerable and beautiful sculptures, display certain traits of the Grecian school. They



cannot be older than Cyrus, but most probably belong to the age of his successors. The mysterious monuments of Hindustan alone seem to claim an equal or more ancient date compared with the labours we have surveyed. Their nature, also, is the same; hence there are not wanting names of highest eminence, who have maintained not only the greater antiquity of Indian art, but that thence has been derived all other, as from the parent source. This opinion has been grounded too exclusively on the dubious inferences of philology, or of mere antiquarian erudition, — dubious, at least, when applied to Sculpture. Here the subject itself ought to supply the true principles of decision; and on this point one observation will suffice. The sculpture, like the architecture, of Egypt, bears the impress of uniform simplicity; the grand lines of composition are few, accessories are sparingly introduced, and wear the same sober, massive, and unpretending character. In the works of Asiatic art, on the contrary, although presenting a general resemblance to those of Egypt, the design is neither simple nor uniform; the parts are numerous, breaking the master lines into multiplied compartments, while the style of ornament is replete with complicated details, and of pretension above the means of the artist. Now, judging according to the natural inferences from these facts, and according to the acknowledged precepts of imitative art, this latter style, with its defects in keeping, has evidently arisen in consequence of superinducing a laboured and injudiciously aspiring taste upon the more severe and simple conceptions of a primitive composition. Similar principles may be obviously traced in the farther progress of the arts eastward. China is admitted, on the most learned authorities, to have been planted by colonists from the banks of the Indus and the Ganges; and in the unchanging modes of that country, we seem almost to

catch glimpses of the aboriginal knowledge of our race. Yet how striking the difference between the ornate and the frittered labours of the Chinese compared with the works either of India or of Egypt! Even their great wall is but the accumulation of petty exertions — an evidence of numerical, not of scientific energy.

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## CHAPTER II.

IN the previous chapter, Egypt has been exhibited as the centre of intelligence in the history of ancient art; and having explained the connexion which can still be traced in the few remaining monuments of the East, we now turn from the parent source to trace the progress of refinement in the West, where, first in Greece, the human mind awoke to the full consciousness of its capacious grasp, and of its exquisite sensibilities.

The universal origin of sculptural representation, already noticed, in the alliance which man forms with natural objects as shadowing forth the affections or the regrets of the heart, is nowhere so conspicuous as in Greece. Here art was poetry from the beginning; her consecrated groves, her winding streams, her flowery plains, the azure depths of her mountains, became at once the residence and the representatives of those beings, whether divine or heroic, who constituted her theology. By a people, simple in their habits, yet ardent in their feelings, this early faith was long remembered, — such reminiscences deeply tincturing much of what is most exquisitely descriptive and



sentimental in Grecian poetry. But a belief so abstract, so untangible in its forms, and so remotely addressed to the senses, would soon prove insufficient to maintain effectual empire over the passions. Attempts were speedily made to secure, as it were, the more immediate presence and protection of the objects of veneration or of worship. Men's desires in this respect, however, as in all other instances, would necessarily be limited by their knowledge and their powers. In the primitive ages, accordingly, objects rude and unfashioned as we learn from history, were adored as representing the divinities of Greece. Even to the time of Pausanias, stones and trunks of trees, rough and uninformed by art, were preserved in the temples: and though replaced by forms almost divine, still regarded with peculiar veneration, as the ancient images of the deities. As skill improved, these signs began to assume more determinate similitude; and from a square column, the first stage, by slow gradations something approaching to a resemblance of the human figure was fashioned. These efforts at sculpture long continued extremely imperfect. The extremities seem not to have been even attempted; the arms were not separated from the body, nor the limbs from each other, but, like the folds of the drapery, stiffly indicated by deep lines drawn on the surface. Such appears to have been the general state of the art immediately prior to the period when it can first be traced, as cultivated with some degree of success in any particular place. This occurs about twelve centuries before Christ.

The fine arts have never flourished in states not commercial; in this respect, presenting a marked contrast to the origin and progress of poetry and music; a fact singularly exemplified in the condition of those cities where arose the primitive schools in Greece. Sicyon, Ægina,

Corinth, and Athens, were the first seats of commerce and of sculpture. Sicyon, with its small but important territory, extending a few miles along the south-eastern extremity of the Corinthian gulf, was the most ancient of the Grecian states, and probably the oldest city of Europe. From the earliest times, it became celebrated for the wealth, enterprise, and intelligence of its population; and from the Sicyonian academy were sent forth many of the most celebrated masters of design; hence Sicyon obtained the venerable appellation of 'Mother of the Arts.' The foundation of this school, though most probably of much higher antiquity, is assigned to Dibutades, who, in the humble occupation of a potter, became the accidental inventor of the art of modelling. For this discovery, so precious in its subsequent effects, he was indebted to the ingenuity of his daughter, who, inspired by love, traced upon the wall, by means of a lamp, the shadowed profile of the favored youth as he slept, that with this imperfect resemblance she might beguile the lingering hours of absence. This outline the father, filling up with clay, formed a medallion, which, even to the time of Pliny, was preserved as a most interesting relic. To the same pleasing origin painting has been ascribed — another instance of that delightful charm, which, to their poetry, their arts, their philosophy even, the Greeks have imparted by the constant union of sentiment and reason — of the heart with the understanding.

The little island, or rather rock, of Ægina, still one of the most interesting spots of Greece, rising above the waves of the Saronic gulf, nearly opposite to Athens, affords a striking illustration of the effects of commercial wisdom. Insignificant in extent, boasting of few productions, it was yet enabled, by this wisdom, long and successfully to maintain the struggle of warfare, and to cherish the

arts of peace and of elegance, especially sculpture, in a school, if not the earliest, certainly latest distinguished by originality of style and invention. Smilis was famous by his statues of Juno, especially one at Samos, called by Pliny 'the most ancient image' of that goddess. Even in the works of this, her first master, it is said, were to be discovered a gravity and austere grandeur, the principles of that style visible still in the noble marbles which once adorned, in Ægina, the temple of Jupiter Panhellenius.

Corinth was early more celebrated as the patroness of painting. Concerning Dædalus, the first of the Athenian sculptors, doubtful or fabulous accounts have reached us ; but a careful investigation of circumstances proves, that of whatsoever country a native, he had rendered himself renowned by the exercise of his skill at the court of Minos before settling in Attica. The facts attending his arrival there, and the history of his previous labours, enable us to fix dates, and to trace the true source of improvement in Grecian art at this particular era. Of the early establishments of the Greeks planted in the isles of the Ægean, which even preceded the mother country in the acquisition of wealth and intelligence, the Doric colony of Crete enjoyed, from a very early period, the happiness and consequent power of settled government. External advantages of situation first invited the access, while domestic institutions secured the benefits, of ancient and uninterrupted intercourse with Egypt. Hence the laws and the arts of the Cretans. With the former, the Athenian hero, Theseus, wished to transplant the latter also ; and while he gave to his countrymen a similar system of policy, he did not fail to secure the co-operation of one whose knowledge might yield powerful aid in humanizing a rude people by adding new dignity to the objects of national veneration. Accordingly Dædalus, accompanying the conqueror of the Minotaur to

Athens, fixes there the commencement of an improved style, 1234 years before the Christian era. With Dædalus, the artists already mentioned are described as nearly or altogether contemporaries.

The performances of Dædalus were chiefly in wood, of which no fewer than nine, of large dimensions, are described as existing in the second century, which, notwithstanding the injuries of fourteen hundred years, and the imperfections of early taste, seemed, in the words of Pausanias, to possess something of divine expression. Their author, as reported by Diodorus, improved upon ancient art, so as to give vivacity to the attitude, and more animated expression to the countenance. Hence we are not to understand, with some, that Dædalus introduced sculpture into Greece, nor even into Attica; but simply that he was the first to form something like a school of art, and whose works first excited the admiration of his own rude age, while they were deemed worthy of notice even in more enlightened times. Indeed the details preserved in the classic writers, that he raised the arms in varied position from the flanks, and opened the eyes, before narrow and blinking, sufficiently prove the extent of preceding art, and the views we have given on the subject. In these primitive schools, however, many centuries necessarily elapsed, before sculpture can be considered as a regular art. Their founders and pupils were little more than ingenious mechanics, who followed carving among other avocations. Such were Endæus of Athens, celebrated for three several statues of Minerva; Æpeus, immortalized as the fabricator of the Trojan horse; Icmulous, praised in the Odyssey as having sculptured the throne of Penelope; with many others who must have contributed to the arts of the heroic ages, and who, if they did not rapidly improve, at least kept alive the knowledge of sculpture.



Besides these continental schools, another must be described, which there is every reason to believe was still more ancient, and which certainly attained higher perfection at an earlier period. This was the insular Ionian school, flourishing in those delightful isles that gem the coast of Asia Minor, and chiefly in Samos and Chios. To this the continental academies were even indebted for many of their most distinguished members, who, leaving the narrow sphere of their island homes, naturally preferred the commercial cities from the same causes which had rendered these originally seats of art, opulence, intelligence, and security. Of the Samian masters, Rhæcus, about the institution of the Olympiads, or 777 B. C., first obtained celebrity, as a sculptor in brass, in which art, Telecles and Theodorus, his son and grandson, also excelled. Their works in ivory, wood, and metal, were extant in the age of Pausanius, whose description exhibits the hard and dry manner of Egypt, whence it is probable these artists had derived their improvements, distinguished for very careful finish. The Chian school claims the praise of first introducing the use of a material to which sculpture mainly owes its perfection, namely, marble. The merit of this happy application is assigned to Malas, the father of a race of sculptors, and who is placed about the 38th Olympiad, or 649 years before the Christian era. Michiades inherited and improved the science of the inventor, transmitting to his own son, Anthermus, the accumulated fame and experience of two generations of sculptors, to whom, as to their successors, the beautiful marbles of their native island furnished one rich means of superiority.

In the insular, — and the evidence is in favour of the Chian school, — we also first hear of bronze statues. The earliest works of this kind were not cast, but exe-

cuted with the hammer. Two manners are discernible ; large figures were formed of plates, and hollow, the interior being filled with clay ; in small pieces, the separate parts were brought nearly into shape in the solid, afterwards united, and the whole finished by the graver and the file. These methods, in each of which rivets, dovetails, and soldering, formed the joints, were gradually superseded as the knowledge of casting was acquired.

About the commencement of the sixth century before Christ, the school of Sicyon was illustrated by Dipænus and Scyllis, brothers, the most famous of her ancient masters, and whose age forms an era in the history of the ancient art, marking the first decided advances towards the mastery of the succeeding style. Their labours were in various materials, the most esteemed of marble ; and the praise of its application is shared betwixt them and the Chian school. Statues by these artists, in Parian marble, were admired in the time of Pliny, excited the cupidity of Nero, and are subsequently described by one of the Christian fathers, from the peculiar veneration in which they were held. The style of sculpture had hitherto been extremely dry and minute ; — a passion for extreme finish, in preference to general effect, had distinguished former masters. This taste had been first introduced, and afterwards maintained, by the limited resources of the art itself, by the mediocrity of artists, and by the dress and ornaments of the time. The hair arranged in undulating locks or spiral curls, and sometimes little separate knobs, was laboured as if to be numbered ; the drapery, disposed in the most rigid and methodical folds, finished with painful minuteness ; at the same time the limbs and countenance retained much of rude and incorrect form and tasteless expression, but elaborated with the extreme of care. It is far easier, and the common error, both of



inferior genius and of an unskilful age, to bestow on parts that talent and application by which a whole is to be perfected. The fault of fastidious and useless labour, with inaccuracy of general result, still attaches to the works of Dipænus and Scyllis, but great melioration is also apparent; their execution was much more free, the whole effect more powerful, the expression, if not more animated, more natural, and the forms better selected and composed. Colossal heads, now in the British Museum, of Hercules and Apollo, most probably of these masters, afford an admirable illustration of these remarks, and of the style of art at this early period. The fiftieth Olympiad, shows all the necessary inventions and principles of mechanical art fully known and universally practised. Even so early as the twentyninth Olympiad, an equestrian group had been executed in Crete by Aristocles; all the proper materials, and the methods of working them, had long been discovered; in the greatest single work of these times, the shrine of Apollo at Amyclæ, by Bathycles the Ionian, every description of relief had been exhibited; and lastly, improvement had been fixed on such principles of taste and composition, as enabled succeeding efforts to carry it forward.

The extent of country in which the art was now cultivated, and the zeal evinced in the pursuit, corresponded to, while they increased, the improvement of taste. Attention is now directed to a new school, that of Magna Græcia, which (during two thousand years), had been gradually rising into importance and excellence. Its chief seats were at Rhegium and Crotona in Italy, and in Sicily, Syracuse and Agrigentum. In these, the artists first practised in metal chiefly, afterwards in marble; and were among the foremost to perfect iconic statues, — a source of most decided advantage to the art. Omitting farther

enumeration, one of these early masters, Dionysius of Rhegium, merits to be mentioned as the first who composed a statue of Homer, erected about the twenty-seventh Olympiad. This was an ideal bronze, in which the traditionary resemblance had been preserved; and from this ancient original were taken those portraits of the father of verse which are mentioned by Pliny as so numerous in his time, and of which one or two exquisite examples still remain.

Thus five centuries and a half before the Christian era, sculpture was practised with success throughout the wide extent of Greece and her colonies. During the former part of the sixth century, however, Sicyon, whose school had added to its ancient supremacy by the superiority of Dipænus and Scyllis, continued to send forth, in their pupils, the most numerous and efficient artists. Of these, the principal were Learchus, a native of Rhegium; Theocles, Dontas, Doryclidos, and Medon, Lacedæmonians; Tecteus and Angelion of Delos, where they erected a colossal statue of Apollo. At Rhegium, Clearchus was highly esteemed, and had a very flourishing academy; while at Agrigentum, Perillus rivalled the masters of the parent schools. He cast the famous bull of Phalaris, afterwards carried off by the Carthaginians, restored by Scipio, again the object of the cupidity of Verres, and of the praise of Cicero, whose words, *ille nobilis Taurus*, prove that the skill of those early ages has not been too highly appreciated.

But the fame of all preceding sculptors has suffered from the superior reputation of the two Chian brothers, Bupalus and Anthemis, who lived 517 years B. C. They were the first who brought to a high degree of perfection the discovery of their ancestors, — sculpture in marble. Both Greece and Asia strove to possess their works, which were equally numerous and excellent, and on which was

inscribed, not their own, but their father's name and their country's, in the following verse: 'The sons of Anthermus will render thee, O Chios, more renowned than thy vines have yet done.' The beauty of these works caused them to be highly valued in all succeeding ages, and they formed part of those master-pieces removed to Rome by order of Augustus.

During the period of fiftyeight years, from the sixtieth to the seventysecond Olimpiad, and the battle of Marathon, sculpture throughout Greece was vigorously exercised, and with corresponding success. At Athens, which, though distinguished in the very commencement of our narrative, has subsequently appeared in the back ground, Pisistratus laid the foundation of that school whence afterwards issued the new lights of the art. This extraordinary man perceived and applied the proper remedy to the poverty of Attica: he introduced manufactures and encouraged commerce; and while the true sources of political greatness were thus opened, the more enviable supremacy of his country was secured in the intellectual empire of literature and the arts of elegance. Yet this man has been termed, in the history of that very country, a tyrant, because he saved her from her worst enemy, the mob — mis-called free citizens — slaves of their own passions, and agents in the hands of demagogues. Our own times are not without similar prejudices. Mankind seem destined, in all ages, to be the dupes of fears and of phantoms which they themselves have evoked, and which distract attention from real danger. Happy that state, governed by rulers, who, like Pisistratus, will respect the essentials of free institutions, who will consecrate the resources of the state to promote the national grandeur, and save the people from themselves! Under his protection were assembled the most esteemed artists of all descriptions: of

sculptors, Eucharis was famous for the figures of warriors in armour; and Callon for statues of bronze. Callimachus is praised as master of all the arts of design, and in sculptural composition had introduced a lightness and elegance before unattained.

In other parts of Greece, during the same interval, were the following: Dameas, of whose works, the statue of his compatriot Milo was the most celebrated, and which the latter, among his other wonderful feats, carried to the place of erection. Polycletus, the first of the name, and his master Ageladas, finished at Argos, their native city, the statue of Cleosthenes in a car, soon after the sixtyseventh Olympiad, and one of the greatest works yet undertaken. At Sicyon were the brothers Canachus and Aristocles, whose two Muses were the finest statues then known; and of which, one is supposed to be the famous antique now in the Barbarini palace. Ascarus, at Elis, produced a Jupiter crowned with flowers; Menecmus and Soidas a Diana, afterwards placed in the palace of Augustus. Menecmus was the first who wrote on the principles of his art. The Dioscorides of Egesias, contemporary with the Persian invasion, have, by a misinterpretation of Pliny, been assigned to the figures now on Monte Cavallo, at Rome.

The victory of Marathon, B. C. 490, inspired fresh vigour into the genius and institutions of Greece. From this date, to the government of Pericles, intervenes a period in moral grandeur, the brightest, perhaps, in Grecian history. Of the sculptors who then flourished, the immediate predecessors, or early contemporaries, of Phidias, the following were the chief: Onatas and Glaucias, of Egina; the one modelled an admirable statue of Gelon, king of Syracuse; the other, an iconic figure of Theagines of Thasos, four hundred times victorious in the pub-



lic games. Critias replaced the statues of Harmodias and Aristogiton, the originals having been carried off by Xerxes. Calamis was still more renowned for his horses, which were likewise iconic statues — a proof how early nature was admitted as the only guide in every department of sculpture. Pythagoras of Rhegium surpassed all his predecessors; his statues of Enthymus and Astylas, conquerors in the Olympic games, were masterpieces of form; and in expression, his Philoctetes exhibited deeper and truer sentiment than had yet appeared in any work. The name of Pythagoras, indeed, is closely associated with the general advancement of the art, as ranking among the inventors of that system of proportion which, derived from nature, taught to unite elegance with truth, and which invariably guided the practice, while its perfection was improved by the discoveries, of each succeeding master. In the mechanical department, also, his manner was more bold, firm, and graceful, in delicacy of style being placed by Quintilian inferior only to Myron, the last and the greatest of the early school.

Myron, a native of Eleutheraæ, exercised his profession chiefly at Athens, of which he enjoyed the citizenship. The decline of his life corresponds with the early labours of Phidias: Myron thus unites the first and second ages of Grecian sculpture, combining in his works many of the essential excellences of its perfection, with some of the remaining hardness and defects of its pupillage. In adopting this chronology, we seem to reconcile conflicting opinions both with each other and with history. The principal works of Myron were in bronze, and the most colossal in wood; consequently, no original of his hand has come down to modern times. There can, however, be no doubt that the famous Discobolos is preserved to us in more than one antique repetition. Hence, and from the



writings of the orators and historians, a fair estimate of his merits may be deduced. His composition was distinguished for energy, science, and truth. Iconic statues he carried to a degree of excellence and vigour, as in the portrait of Ladus, unsurpassed in any succeeding age. The Bacchus, Erectheus, and Apollo, executed by order of the state, were not less admired by the Athenians; the last, carried away by Antony, was restored to them by Augustus, in consequence of a dream. His representations of animals were equally admirable; and seem, if possible, to have been more universally praised, judging from the circumstance of no fewer than thirtysix laudatory poems on the famous heifer being still extant in the Anthology. Myron carried mere imitative art to its utmost limits; yet in some of the minor details, the dry manner of the first ages appeared. Sculpture, as the representation of the external form, he perfected; but as an instrument of touching the heart — of elevating the imagination — of embodying sentiment, he proved unequal to call forth its powers. He represented nature forcibly and with fidelity, but without grandeur or ideal elevation. An important approach, however, to just conceptions of abstract beauty, is to be perceived in the principle which he is said first to have promulgated, — that propriety in the separate parts was beauty, or that a work of art was beautiful as a whole, according as the partial forms and proportions corresponded to their offices and to the general character. This, in fact, is the essence of corporeal beauty, the highest refinement of material art; and assigns to form, independent of mind, the noblest expression of which it is susceptible. This is the utmost range attained by the genius of this the first period in the history of art in Greece, and an admirable ground-work for the sublimity, and refined perceptions of the beautiful, added in the era that followed.

Casting a retrospect over the ages that have passed in review, how are we struck with the slow and painful growth of human invention ! The collective energies and discoveries of a thousand years were required to rear the arts of Greece — not to their perfection, but to the state where the first decided approaches to it commence. Such is the length of time from the first feeble glimmerings of imitative art to the era of Dipænus and Scyllis, Bupalus and Anthermus. The interval of forty years occupied by these artists, from the fiftieth to the sixtieth Olympiad, may be considered as terminating the old, and introducing the new school. The art was now in possession of all the means and instruments, the correct application of which bound the aspirings and the praise of mediocrity, but which merely become subservient to the aims of loftier minds. During part of this period, also, these means were industriously, and with daily improving skill, employed. From this date to the battle of Marathon, an interval of fifty-eight years, improvement was rapid in every corner of Greece and her colonies. Fortunately, also, the movement then given to Sculpture was one of diffuse activity, not an influence derived from, and sustained amongst, a few leading minds, whose authority might thus have operated fatally, by binding down to fixed and imperfect modes the aspirings of future genius. This advantage was secured by the number of independent states forming the Grecian confederacy, a constitution, which, throughout the whole history of ancient art, exercised the most beneficial effects, both by preventing mannerism, in taste, and by nourishing emulation.

The Persian invasion, the victories of Marathon, Salamis, and Platea, awakened a new energy in the moral character of Greece, infusing at the same time into her institutions a vigour and a stability before unknown.

From the elevation she had now attained among the nations of the earth, her genius rushed forward as from vantage ground. In every field of mental enterprise, indeed, a certain preparation had already been made, and in some the best exertions had long been achieved. In poetry a sublimity had been attained, which has yet set at nought all succeeding rivalry. But in that knowledge, and in those arts, which depend less upon individual eminence, and more upon the circumstances of the times, and upon a strong national interest, — in all those studies which embrace numbers by their consequences or their success, which demand the union of patient perseverance with high talent, and finally, which pertain to the business of public life, and require deep insight into the nicer distinctions of human character — all, from this happy era, with an almost supernatural progress, attained maturity.

The opulence and security, with the resulting consciousness of power, and the love of elegance, which followed the defeat of the Barbarians, proved especially propitious to the arts of sculpture and architecture. If in the former any doubt be entertained, what the difference of improvement was between the artists who preceded and those who followed the age of Xerxes, we have only to recall the fortunes of the drama during the same heart-stirring period. In the last of the 74th Olympiad, A. C. 489, or one year after the battle of Marathon, Æschylus placed the first wreath upon the solemn brow of Tragedy. Not twenty years afterwards, the warrior bard was vanquished by his youthful rival. Between the Prometheus of Æschylus, then, and the Œdipus of Sophocles, we find as wide an interval as is necessary to suppose between the sculptures contemporary with the former, and the productions of Polycletus or Myron.



## CHAPTER III.

THE age of Pericles seemed marked out by fortune as a distinguished epoch in the history of his country. The fine talents, also, and popular qualities of this accomplished statesman, were admirably adapted to turn to the best account the propitious circumstances of the period. To the further progress of the fine arts, and of sculpture in particular, preceding events, and their present consequences, almost necessarily contributed; while the condition of the art itself was just fitted to receive the perfecting impulse.

The energies of sculpture, likewise, were now to be more directly concentrated in one parent school; which, while it especially adorned one seat, preserved yet the stirring rivalry of honorable emulation, as being the common seminary of free and independent states. The noble stand she had made, her superior sacrifices and sufferings in the cause of freedom, directed to Athens the sympathy and deference of Greece. The prosperity, too, of her political situation, was suitable to the support of this moral pre-eminence. Provided with means of defence and of commerce, on a scale which seemed to contemplate future empire, she was left by Themistocles with ample resources — a noble field of fame and recompense for the artist. He himself, satisfied with the useful, had cared less about the ornamental; but, among the little he did add, were the lions, now at Venice, originally placed on the entrance to the Piræus, in which fidelity of detail, and grandeur of conception, have furnished to us existing evidence of the skill of this age.

Great as they were, the mind of Phidias proved equal to these external advantages. Possessing that rarest

and highest of all genius which is at once creative and regular — learned, yet original, he caught the inspiration of art in the most elevated range of the past, bringing in his own attainments a sublimity and truth yet unequalled by all that has followed.

This great master, the son of Charmidas, an Athenian citizen, was born about the 72d Olympiad, or nearly 500 years before our era, and studied under Eladas. His numerous works belonged to three distinct classes: Toreutic, or statues of mixed materials, ivory being the chief, — statues of bronze, — sculptures in marble. In this enumeration are included only capital performances, for exercises in wood, plaster, clay, and minute labours in in carving, are recorded occasionally to have occupied his attention. The beauty of these miniatures was not inferior to the excellence of his greater works; at once sublime and ingenious, he executed grand undertakings with majesty and force, and the most minute with simplicity and truth.

‘*Artis Phidiacæ toreuma durum  
Pisces adspicis: adde aquam, natabunt.*’

‘These fish are iv’ry — but by Phidias made:  
From want of water only seem they dead.’

Of the works belonging to the first division, the Olympian Jupiter, and the Minerva of the Parthenon, colossal statues composed of gold and ivory, were the most wonderful productions of ancient art. The former, placed in the Temple at Elis, was sixty feet high, in a reposing attitude, the body naked to the cincture, the lower limbs clothed in a robe gemmed with golden flowers; the hair also was of gold, bound with an enamelled crown; the eyes of precious stones; the rest of ivory. Notwithstanding the gigantic proportions, every part was wrought with the most scrupulous delicacy; even the splendid



throne was carved with exquisite nicety. The whole was finished before the artist had obtained the direction of the public works of the Athenians, in the 83d Olympiad after a labour of ten years; the same date in which Herodotus read the second part of his history, the first regular prose composition that had been heard at Athens.

About twelve years later was executed the Minerva, of inferior dimensions, being only forty feet in altitude, but equal, if not superior, in beauty of workmanship and richness of material, the nude being of ivory, the ornaments of gold. A flowing tunic added grace to the erect attitude of the goddess: in one hand was a spear, upon the head a casque; on the ground a buckler, exquisitely carved, the concave representing the giants' war, the convex a conflict with the Amazons, portraits of the artist and of his patron being introduced among the Athenian combatants — one cause of the future misfortunes which envy brought upon the author. On the golden sandals was also sculptured another favorite subject, the battle of the Centaurs, praised by historians as a perfect gem of minute art.

Such admiration attached to these two works, that they were regarded as 'having added majesty to the received religion;' and it was esteemed a misfortune not to have been able, once in a lifetime, to behold them. Yet judged according to the true principles of genuine art, theirs was not a legitimate beauty. It does not excite surprise, then, to learn that Phidias himself disapproved of the mixed effect produced by such a combination of different substances, nor will it appear presumptuous here to condemn these splendid representations. It is not sufficient that a work of art does produce a powerful impression — it is indispensable to its excellence that the means employed be in accordance with the principles and the mode of imi-

tation. Now, in the compositions just described, exposed as they were to the dim light of the ancient temple, and from very magnitude imperfectly comprehended, the effects of variously reflecting surfaces, now gloom, now glowing of unearthly lustre, must have been rendered doubly imposing. But this influence, though well calculated to increase superstitious devotion, or to impress mysterious terror on the bewildered sense, was meretricious, altogether diverse from the solemn repose, the simple majesty of form and expression, which constitute the true sublimity of sculptural representation.

Statuary, or the art of casting in bronze, as the term was used by the ancients, Phidias carried to unrivalled perfection. The Amazon, the Minerva, at Lemnos, and in the Acropolis, were considered as the masterpieces in this department. The last, called the Minerva Polias, was of such majestic proportions, that the crest and helmet might be discerned above the battlements of the citadel at a distance of twentyfive miles, pointing home to the Athenian mariner, as he rounded the promontory of Sunium. Of these and other works, descriptions alone remain; we are consequently indebted for our positive knowledge of his style and principles to the marble sculptures of Phidias, in which department numerous admirable performances of his hand have also perished; but we have here an advantage in the possession of undoubted originals denied in every other instance.

Of the scholars of Phidias, the most esteemed were Alcamenes the Athenian, and Agoracritus of Paros. Their real merit, however, is matter of uncertainty, since their works are reported to have been retouched by their master, who was likewise in the habit of inscribing his statues with the names of his favorite pupils. Indeed, the sublime style perfected by Phidias seems almost to have

expired with himself — not that the art declined, but a predilection for subjects of beauty, and the softer graces, in preference to more heroic and masculine character, with the exception of the grand relievos on the temple of Olympia, may be traced even among his immediate disciples. Among his contemporaries, indeed, Polycletus, the second of the name, has been by some placed equal in grandeur of style, while by others he has been described as unequal, to the majesty of the great Athenian. Polycletus himself appears to have decided the controversy, by showing, from the selection of his subjects, that his genius carried him to the imitation rather of the beautiful than the great. His most celebrated performances were the statues of two youths, both nude, the Diadumenos and the Doryphorus, so called from their action of binding the head with a fillet, and bearing a spear. The latter formed the famous ‘canon,’ from which, as from an unerring standard, all succeeding artists, even Lysippus, borrowed their proportions. Among contemporaries, also, a most distinguished station must have been occupied by Ctesilaus, since he contested with Phidias and Polycletus the public prize of merit for a statue to be dedicated in the temple of the Ephesian Diana. To this artist is erroneously ascribed one of the finest specimens of art now in existence, miscalled, but best known as, the Dying Gladiator, and which, more than any other ancient example, discovers the most profound knowledge of the internal structure of the human frame.

From the banishment and death of Phidias, which occurred some time before his patron died of the plague, in the last year of the eightyseventh Olympiad, the history of art is carried forward through a period, one of the most stormy and unsettled in the Grecian annals. He beheld the commencement of the Peloponnesian war, an

event, indeed, Pericles is accused of having at least hastened, in order to screen his remaining friends from those accusations of which the sculptor had been the guiltless victim. During thirty years of hostile commotions, the arts flourished with almost unimpaired vigor, except that towards the close of the contest, sculpture, which had naturally participated in the fortunes of Athens, suffered a decline in this its capital school. The spirit of the age generally, however, united with the sentiment of hostility a more generous rivalry in excellence of every kind. The grand and beautiful in art continued to be followed and admired, while, amid the contention of arms, eloquence began to attain that nervous elegance which yet renders attic oratory the finest model of deliberative procedure. Even the less friendly interval which followed the establishment of the iron rule of Sparta—the ruin of the milder and more splendid dominion of Athens—and, more disastrous still, the war kindled by the ambition of Thebes, with the various isolated struggles arising out of these leading events, appear to have produced no material degradation in that heroic style, whose lofty character harmonized with the strong excitement of contests for freedom or empire.

Of the artists who adorned this stirring era, the names of nearly fifty, with descriptions of certain of their works, have been handed down in the incidental notices of contemporary history, or in the more detailed accounts of Pausanius, Strabo, and Pliny. Naucydes was author of that beautiful figure holding a discus, and measuring in his own mind the distance, of which antique copies remain, admired for fine position, sweet variety of contour, and unaffected expression. Leochares, Bryaxis, and Timotheus, assisted in the erection of the tomb of Mausolus, where Scopas, superior to all others mentioned, presided.



Thus his age is fixed about the 102d Olympiad, or 370 B. C. To the chisel of this eminent artist is ascribed the Townley Venus, or Dione, now in the British Museum, as also the group of Niobe at Florence. Grace, softness, and truth, were the characteristics of his style, which may be considered as forming the intermediate gradation between that of Phidias and those of Praxiteles and Lysippus; between the two grand divisions of Greek sculpture, the schools of grandeur and of beauty.

In the era and labours of Phidias, we discover the utmost excellence to which Grecian genius attained in the arts. From an examination, then, of this excellence, we shall not only obtain a knowledge of that style pronounced by the Greeks themselves to be their proudest achievement in sculpture, but may also be able to elicit principles of the highest general importance in the philosophy of imitative art. This inquiry likewise demands attention, were it merely on account of the singularly fortunate circumstances under which it can be instituted. Respecting the most esteemed masterpieces of antiquity, reasonable doubts still exist how far our judgments are formed upon real originals. But in the marbles of the British Museum, the former ornaments of the Parthenon, we certainly behold the conceptions, and, in some measure, the very practice of the great Athenian sculptor. Both statues and relievos compose these precious remains, one of the noblest bequests of ancient to modern talent. The statues adorned the two tympana of the Parthenon, which was amphiprostylos or double-fronted, consisting, besides fragments, of fourteen groups, or seventeen figures, of the natural proportions. The relievos are of two kinds, one of which formed the inner frieze of the cella, and flat, representing the procession of the Panathenean festival; the other, consisting of fifteen metopes



of the exterior peristyle, very bold, even to entire roundness in some parts, the subject, combats of the Centaurs with the followers of Theseus, appropriate to a national temple.

In these sculptures, the technicality is of unequal merit ; but in the design, the presence of the same mind is visible throughout. In the statues, and in the frieze, of which nearly two hundred feet still remain, the execution generally approaches so near the beauty and grandeur of the composition, that we seem to trace not only one intelligence, but one hand ; in the metopes, again, a baldness of rendering, utterly inconsistent with the fervid idea, is occasionally perceivable. These contradictions would naturally arise from, and can be explained only by, the fact that the master-spirit overlooking the whole trusted the expressing of his conceptions to assistants of dissimilar capacity. Of the intellectual character, grandeur is the prevailing principle ; the grandeur of simplicity and nature, devoid of all parade or ostentation of art. The means are forgotten in their very excellence, and in the fullest accomplishment of the end. The ancient critics, who, in speaking of Phidias, seem to labour with the power of those ideas awakened by the contemplation of his works, are fond of comparing their effects to those of the eloquence of their most accomplished orators. The comparison is happy. The sculpture of Phidias might well be assimilated to Demosthenian eloquence, in the truth and affecting interest of its imagery, and in its power of bearing the whole soul along in our engrossing feeling. But the sternness and the severity of the orator, the taking of the heart by force, attach not to the artist : all is here sweet and gracious ; we are willing captives to the witchery of art. It is this union of the graceful and the pleasing with the energetic and the great, which constitutes

the surpassing merit of the works we are considering. Exquisitely delicate in the minute, in the grand, the style is bold, vigorous, and flowing. Their author, to use the language of antiquity, united the three characteristics of truth, grandeur, and minute refinement; exhibiting majesty, gravity, breadth, and magnificence of composition, with a practice scrupulous in detail, and truth of individual representation, yet in the handling rapid, broad, and firm. This harmonious assemblage of qualities, in themselves dissimilar, in their results the same, gives to the productions of this master an ease, a grace, a vitality, resembling more the spontaneous overflowings of inspiration than the laborious offspring of thought and science.

The attentive study of the remaining labours of Phidias, and, fortunately for the arts of Britain, their final abiding place is with us, will supply a criterion by which to estimate the principles of the beautiful in execution, and of the ideal in imitative art, as exercised among the Greeks in the most splendid period of their refinement, and will prove guides by which we may emulate, perhaps, equal, our masters.

In all that merely meets the eye, the marbles of the Parthenon display the finest keeping, with the general nobleness of their intellectual character. But the execution is perfect, simply because the composition is so. It comes not forward as an independent merit. Its exquisite mechanism operates without intruding. Unseen and unfelt amid the intelligence it conveys, it is finally noticed as an harmonious element of a perfect whole, and only then calls forth an especial admiration. The finish is high, and even delicate, because the extreme beauty and correctness of the design required to be rendered with corresponding elegance and ease. The chiselling is at once detailed and vigorous, harmonizing with attitudes and

expressions full of vivacity, natural grace, and dignity. The touch is broad, the forms decided — the marking deep and firm, according with and increasing the general grandeur and conception. The style of design, indeed, is, in the strictest acceptation, learned, the parts being pronounced with a decision and truth unequalled, we are almost inclined to say, in any other remain of antiquity.

The ideal of Phidias is derived entirely from nature, as the true ideal of art must ever be. Much has been said respecting the import of this term among the ancients; and the words their writers have employed in speaking of this very master, have been construed into meanings not only inconsistent with, but subversive of, the principles of genuine excellence. If, by the divine archetypes which he is reported to have followed, be implied, that he copied after ideas not existing in nature — living and tangible nature, the breathing works before us attest, that whether ancients or moderns, these critics speak with more zeal than knowledge. In the Elgin marbles, every conception deeply participates of human sentiment and action, so intimately does the representation belong to reality, that every form seems, by the touch of enchantment, to have become marble in the very energies of its natural life. This happy effect of truth, however, does not arise from the imitation of common, that is, of imperfect types; neither is nature the only real object of art, viewed through any medium of fancy, nor imitated according to conventional or imaginative principles. The artist has only looked abroad upon all existence, refining partial conceptions and limited modes by the unerring and collected harmonies of the whole. The true ideal, then — the ideal of Grecian sculpture, as beheld in these its sublimest productions, is but the embodied union of whatever of beauty and perfection still lingers among the forms of nature

viewed universally — free from individuality or accident. Truth is thus the primary constituent of the ideal. Beauty is the perfect expression of this truth, agreeably to the most unblemished and purest models which general nature presents. In this union of collective excellence and individual verisimilitude, the mind feels, and at once acknowledges, a power of awakening and reflecting its own truest, best sympathies. These principles are unfolded in their purest elements; and the modes of accomplishing this union distinctly traceable by careful observation on the style of Phidias. The forms are, in the first place, composed with the most correct, but unostentatious science; hence the freedom of their movements, the ease of their attitudes, seeming to possess the same capabilities of momentary action as the living models. In this anatomical knowledge, too, as actually displayed, there is a truly admirable simplicity: the bones and muscles are, indeed, pronounced with a firmness rare in antique sculpture, whence chiefly arises the wonderful elasticity of the figures. All this is unaccompanied with the slightest exaggeration; the divisions being few, and masses large, the eye runs sweetly along the general forms, yet finds wherewithal to be delighted in resting upon details. This absence, or rather this unobtrusiveness, of all pomp of art, throws over the whole an air of reality and of unsophisticated nature. But with these essential qualities of merely imitative art, are united perfect symmetry, the most harmonious contours, grand composition, the most refined taste, and noble expression. This causes every figure to respire an heroic and elevated character. Hence, we perceive, that to base ideal upon imitative art — to address the imagination by grandeur of design and perfection of form, while he appealed to the judgment by fidelity of detail and correctness of resemblance — have formed the objects of



this great sculptor. The relations under which truth and imagination produce results at once grand and interesting, he has carefully studied and successfully rendered. Hence, while the general composition breathes the loftiest spirit of ideal or possible excellence, the means by which the sentiment is rendered are received from individual nature, expressed simply, and without artifice. In this happy and unobtrusive union of nature and imagination, in this continually remounting, without convention or ostentation, to the eternal sources of natural truth and beauty, Phidias displays the real sublimity of art, and stands unrivalled among the masters of the ancient world.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

THE progressive change in sculpture, from a style of severe and simple majesty, to one of more studied elegance and softer character, already noticed as having commenced even in the lifetime of Phidias, received its full developement under those masters who adorned the beginning of the Macedonian empire. Various political and moral causes, without decline of talent, might have contributed to this change, which is, not even so great, while it corresponds with, the contemporary revolutions which, from similar origin, took place in manners and literature, in the opinions and usages of the times. The annals of no nation, also, can boast a distinguished succession of names, eminent in the exercises of the very highest genius. Sublimity is, in its own nature, a more



simple sentiment than beauty, and the sources whence it springs infinitely more limited. If, then, we find the true sublime in Grecian sculpture confined to almost the age and the labour of one man, is this to be wondered at, when the same is the case, not only in their poetry, an art far more abundant in resources, but in the poetical literature of every people? The sculptors, then, who followed the era of Pericles to the death of Alexander, can be called inferior to Phidias, only in the same sense as the poets who succeeded will be termed inferior to Homer. In both instances, the change was but the application of principles which in their essence could not vary, the subjects requiring a modification of certain distinguishing qualities.

But an opinion opposite to this is more commonly entertained, namely, that not till the improvements of Praxiteles and Lysippus, was ancient art perfectly free from the rude and harsh of that early taste. A glance, however, either to the Greek historians, or especially to the remaining labours of Phidias himself, is more than sufficient to show how utterly without foundation is this censure; and that no other man has united in his style more of the highest excellences. It is, in fact, this union which truly constitutes beauty in sculpture, whose sources of pleasing and of moving, being new, and derived only from the essential elements of design, form, and expression, admit of separation or imperfection with peculiar disadvantage. If we examine the Elgin Marbles in regard to those qualities considered as especial constituents of the beautiful, we shall find how slight indeed could be succeeding additions. More seductive grace, an air more elaborately refined, may have been given to the female statues of Praxiteles; but for that perfect beauty, which arises from including

the essentials of excellence in the most liberal proportion, we search successfully in the labours of Phidias alone.

The views now taken of Grecian sculpture, in which we have divided the subject into three schools, are thus proved to be correct. Two of these have already been examined; the old school, which brought material art almost to perfection, retaining only a degree of constraint, but wanting the expression of mind; the Phidian, or sublime school, in which the genius of art soared to its loftiest height. The third is now to be considered, which, from the prevailing character of its principal works, has been rightly termed the School of the Beautiful.

The discussions which have been so warmly agitated regarding the true era of this school, seem entirely gratuitous. It is acknowledged, that the greatest masters of whom this latter age could boast, were Praxiteles and Lysippus, contemporaries, and both highly esteemed by Alexander the Great. Coeval, then, with the commencement of the career, and during the brief empire, of this prince, is to be placed the brightest period in this last display of the arts and genius of Greece. Many external circumstances concurred, with the encouragement given by Alexander himself, to render his reign propitious to refinement, science, and letters; while a reaction of opposite influences, on his death, closed with that event both the progress of higher improvement, and even the prospect of long retaining the knowledge possessed. In sculpture, particularly, a visible decay of talent, and a neglect of the exercise, soon after follow. Indeed, Pliny decidedly says, that art from thenceforth ceased, — *deinde cessavit ars*. This expression must be understood in a limited sense; there is no doubt, however, that the causes of decline, whose consequences wealth, the complexion and renewed energies of the times, had retarded, were then recalled into more direct activity.

Praxiteles, born about the 104th Olympiad, or 364 B. C., was a native of Magna Grecia, but of what town is uncertain. From preceding remarks it will appear, that in praising him as an original inventor, — the discoverer of a new style, writers very generally have mistaken the influence exercised by his genius upon the progress and character of sculpture. Finding the highest sublimity in the more masculine graces of the art already reached; perceiving, also, that the taste of his age tended thitherwards; he resolved to woo exclusively the milder and gentler beauties of style. In this pursuit he attained eminent success. None ever more happily succeeded in uniting softness with force, — elegance and refinement with simplicity and purity; his grace never degenerates into the affected, nor his delicacy into the artificial. He caught the delightful medium between the stern majesty which awes, and the beauty which merely seduces, — between the external allurements of form, and the colder, but loftier, charm of intellectuality. Over his compositions he has thrown an expression spiritual at once and sensual; a voluptuousness and modesty which touch the most insensible, yet startle not the most retiring.

The works which remain of this master, either in originals or in repetitions, — the Faun, — the Thespian Cupid, in the Museum of the capitol, — the Apollino with a Lizard, one of the most beautiful, as well as difficult, specimens of antiquity, abundantly justify this character. Of the works that have utterly perished, the nude and draped, or Coan and Gnidian Venus of Praxiteles, fixed each a standard which future invention dared scarcely to alter. Indeed, he appears to have been the first, perhaps the sole master, who attained the true ideal on this subject, in the perfect union of yielding feminine grace with the dignity

of intellectual expression. The Venus of Gnidos, in her representative the Medicean, still 'enchants the world,'

— and fills

The air around with beauty : we inhale  
 The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils  
 Part of its immortality ; the veil  
 Of Heaven is half withdrawn ; within the pale  
 We stand, and in that form and face behold  
 What mind can make when nature's self would fail.

Lysippus of Sicyon the younger, contemporary and rival of the preceding, appears to have wrought only in metal. Accordingly, in comparing him with Phidias, Aristotle employs distinctive terms, which both point out this fact, and would alone settle the needless dispute, whether the latter wrought in marble. Of the 610 works, an incredible number, ascribed to Lysippus, not one survives ; for the Venetian horses originally brought from Chios, by Theodosius the younger, to Constantinople, and thence removed to St Mark's in 1204, are unworthy of the artist's reputation. The bust at Portici requires also to be authenticated, though of superior merit. Born in the lowest walks of life, Lysippus was, in a great measure, self-taught, and commenced his studies where the art itself had begun, — with nature. Though a perfect master of beauty, his style appears to have been distinguished by a more masculine character than that of the age. He was emulous of reviving the grave and severe grandeur of the preceding school. This predilection his subjects and materials would cherish, if not produce. Colossal and equestrian statues of warriors in bronze, demanded a forceful and vigorous composition, with sober and dignified expression. The Tarentine Jupiter, sixty feet high, was in magnitude equal to any undertaking in the ancient world ; and twentyone equestrian statues of Alexander's body-



guard, who fell at the Granicus, would alone have sufficed for the labour of years to an ordinary artist. But not only in great works was Lysippus famous; many of the most beautiful and delicate descriptions are recorded. His finishing was exquisite, his imitation of nature faithful 'as truth itself,' and he especially excelled in the knowledge of symmetry. He was so great a favorite with Alexander, that to him alone permission of casting the prince's statue was granted; and it may serve to prove how justly this admiration of his own age was deserved, that centuries after, even the monster Tiberius trembled in his palace at an insurrection of the Roman people, occasioned by the removal from one of the public baths of a figure by Lysippus.

During at least forty years from the death of Alexander, the school founded and presided in by these two masters would preserve undiminished the beauty of the art. The latter was still alive on the death of the Macedonian prince, in the last year of the 114th Olympiad, or 324 B. C.; while Praxiteles survived to the 123d Olympiad. If, again, we consider the pupils immediately deriving their science from these great men, the period may be extended during which Greece could have produced sculptors not unworthy her ancient glory. When we contemplate also her condition in other respects, never had she exhibited a more numerous or a more imposing assemblage of intellectual worthies. Surely, then, the death of a despot could not have wrought so fatal and so immediate a decline in the means and faculties of human genius. No! but the consequences of that event destroyed an artificial system, and dried up factitious streams of prosperity, which for a time had supplied or concealed the absence of those healthful and constitutional currents, whence was circulated, throughout the whole of Greece, the very life-blood of her



glory and greatness. Had liberal institutions been then restored; had the moral vigour of her better days reappeared, even amid wars and revolutions — in such struggles they had been reared — her genius and taste, her letters and arts, would have survived. These were innate in the constitution of her free states. The last, in particular, formed at once a means and an end in her popular governments. Springing up an ornamental blossom amid the sterner and the nobler fruits of liberty, they withered as independence decayed.

We would not be understood as here maintaining a respectable and amiable, but unfounded theory, that the fine arts have never flourished except under popular governments, nor that they ceased with such forms in Greece. In this, more than in any walk of genius, is the active encouragement of the supreme power indispensable to excellence. But never can the arts of taste flourish in true grandeur, where patriotism and popular feeling are not the paramount, or at least, the apparently paramount, principles of the times, and source of their peculiar cultivation. The arts themselves must be essentially free; they must likewise derive their quickening inspiration from a national sentiment of interest and of country. Pisis-tratus and Pericles, we have seen, while rulers of Athens, were but superintendents of the arts, in their application to public purposes, in unison with public will, and in obedience to public approval. Even Phidias prepared with trembling anxiety to receive the award of merit from the voice of his fellow-citizens; and only on the supposition that they were to undergo the ordeal of a close inspection before being placed in their destined situation, can we account for the exquisite finish of the Elgin Marbles, even in parts not exposed to the effects of climate. Only when the purity of this source of honor was contaminated, did

art fall, never to rise again. Not till every institution belonging to the republican ages of Greece; not till every sentiment of a generous kind had been trampled upon; not till the Olympic games ceased, — till the physical education and martial exercises of the youth were neglected, — till the arts, separated from national polity, became dependent on the caprice of individuals, — till there was no longer public spirit nor patriotic feeling; not till all that creates and endears the name of country had sunk beneath a foreign yoke or domestic thralldom, did Greece cease to produce artists.

Again, the period of this decline extends through nearly two hundred years, from the dismemberment of the Macedonian empire, to the final reduction of Greece into a Roman province. This space of time, in regard to the eras of Sculpture, has been variously and too minutely divided. Each favorable turn of circumstances enabling the art to recover a little, has been exalted into an epoch. Into these details it needs not to enter. From the death of Praxiteles, or at least in the school of his own and the pupils of Lysippus, as Cephissodotus, son of the former, Tauriscus, Eubolas, Pamphilus, Polyceutas, Agasias, and others, it does not appear that original works of magnitude or beauty were produced. After this the labours of artists seem to have been confined to copies of the works of the older masters, and chiefly to making repetitions in marble of the ancient bronzes. To this period belong many of the antique marbles now remaining. Pliny, indeed, though not with strict correctness, considers that Sculpture lay dormant during one hundred and twenty years, from the 120th to the 150th Olympiad. The Achæan league, and the expiring efforts of Greece under the last of her heroes, Aratus and Philopæmen, inspired a degree of vigour into her intellectual exertions. Of

these warriors, contemporary statues are noticed by Pausanias; and the latter is reported to have excelled in painting. But the Ætolian war broke for ever the ties of country, and the sacredness of national glory. Temples were therein first desecrated, — statues and paintings defaced in Greece, and by the hands of Greeks. If, during the same era, we direct our attention to the successors of Alexander in Egypt and Asia, we find letters cultivated in preference to art; or, where Sculpture is patronised, as at the courts of the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ, the cultivation of a taste between Grecian and barbarian only hastened the progress of corruption. One bright interval yet arose in the parent seats of refinement, upon the declaration, by the Romans, of freedom to the states of Greece. Sculpture, for more than thirty years of apparent liberty at least, and of real repose, was exercised with considerable success by the masters, Antheus, Callistratus, Polycles Apollodorus, Pasiteles, and others, possessing considerable merit, though far below the genius of ancient times. This was the struggling gleam of the expiring taper — the farewell sweet of a sun about to set forever. The independence of Greece endured only by sufferance; the Achæan league was dissolved, and Corinth and its capitol levelled with the dust, to the sound of Roman trumpets — the knell of freedom and of the arts in Greece.

## CHAPTER V.

THE history of Sculpture in Italy divides into two distinct, yet connected, subjects of inquiry, embracing two very dissimilar dynasties — the Etruscan and the Roman. Of the former interesting people we know far too little commensurate with their power, and the influence which they appear to have exercised upon the spirit and progress of ancient art. The Thyrreneans, or Etruscans, it is certain, possessed, at a very early period, the empire of almost the whole Italian peninsula, and, to a very considerable extent, whatever of refinement existed in those primitive times. Respecting the origin of the nation, however, and the sources of this intelligence, authors disagree; while the scanty annals that have reached us, through the medium of the Latins and Greeks, enemies or rivals, leave but too much scope for unsettled opinion. The various systems here may be arranged under two general heads; first, that the Etruscans were of Lydian extraction, and under their king, Thyrrenus, settled in Italy at an era anterior to authentic history: or, secondly, that the early colonization of Etruria was owing to the wandering tribes from Greece, chiefly of the Pelasgic race, who settled at different times prior to the Trojan war. Neither of these opinions, singly, accords with contemporary, nor explains subsequent events; combined, they account both for the skill attained by the Etruscans in the arts of taste and civil government, while Greece was yet in a state of pastoral rudeness, and also for the subsequent interweaving into their history of Grecian fable and mythology. We enter not farther into this disquisition, interesting as it undoubtedly is. For our present purpose, it is sufficient to bear in mind, that Sculpture in



Etruria had attained a coeval, if not a prior, degree of refinement as compared with Greece, and that regard to preserving the unity of the subject has alone occasioned the precedence in time given to the arts of the latter.

The remains of Etruscan Sculpture are not numerous, and of these the authenticity of some may justly be doubted. Taken in general, the works of national art consist of medals and coins; statues of bronze and marble; relievos; sculptured gems; engraved bronzes; and paintings.

The first class is the most numerous, and contains many beautiful, indeed, for those early ages, wonderful specimens. These are all cast of a compound metal, being of two kinds, either mythological or symbolical in their representations. Of the statues, it is difficult to say whether those in marble be early Greek or Etruscan; the smaller ones in bronze are more authentic, being household divinities, or merely ornaments: of those in the size of nature, scarcely one has escaped suspicion of its true age. One or two exhibit great beauty. Of the ancient relievos found in various parts of Italy, several are admitted to be genuine Etruscan; and here there can be little hesitation, as a series of sepulchral monuments, sarcophagi, and altars, might be arranged and compared throughout the whole period of Italian history. Gem engraving was brought to great perfection at an early period both in Greece and Italy. Of this minute but charming art, probably the oldest specimen now extant represents five of the seven chiefs who fought against Thebes. Of this the design is inartificial, and the workmanship rude; other Etruscan gems, however, or *scarabæi*, from their resemblance to the shape of a beetle, as the Tydeus and Peleus, equal the most exquisite performances in this branch. The most curious and numerous remains belong to the class of engraved bronzes, or *pateræ*, small vessels used



in sacrificing, circular, and, in the single instance of the Etruscan, with a handle. On the bottom, inside, which is perfectly flat, being merely a plate surrounded with a shallow brim, there is usually engraved some mythological subject, of simple design, expressed in few, bold, firm, and deep lines.

In the style of these remains, three distinct eras of art among the Etruscans may be discerned. The first, or ancient style, commences with the earliest notices of the people. It has been confounded with the Egyptian and the Grecian ; but the similarity is not greater than characterises the infancy of invention among every people. And though, apart, it might be difficult to discern their national or original elements, considered in connexion with the style of the following era, their distinctive character becomes apparent, of an unfettered imagination, essaying its feeble powers by no systematic, no conventional representation, arising, as in Egypt, from an impulse foreign to art ; while, from Greek sculpture of the same age, we clearly distinguish the rudiments of new modes, and certain specialities in the relations between fancy and feeling with nature. The vigorous imagination, the bold forms and general tendency to exaggeration, which may be traced even in its infancy, display in its perfection, during the second epoch, the peculiar characteristics of Etruscan sculpture. In the works of this age, there is strength, and massiveness, and power ; but they want delicacy of proportion, discrimination of character, and graceful simplicity. The third epoch embraces that period which beheld the gradual disappearance of the Tuscans as an independent state from the face of Italy. Their political empire was ingulfed in the extending dominion of Rome : the discriminative character of their genius merged in the arts of the colonial Greeks ; when, as we have already

seen, the schools of Rhegium and Crotona sent forth masters equal, if not superior, to those of Greece.

These eras, in date and duration, nearly coincide with as many revolutions in the political history of the nation. Their greatest extent of territory was held but for a short time, being quickly reduced on the south by settlements of the Dorian colonies, and on the north by the Gauls and Ligurians. It was only during their diminished, but secure and admirably constituted empire in Etruria Proper, that their national arts flourished, and their national style was formed. Each of twelve allied, but separately independent capitals, then became a school of art, the friendly rival of her compeers — each exciting the industry, and directing the advance, of the other — each the Athens of ancient Italy. Inflamed by the brutal spirit of mere conquest, the Romans broke in upon this tranquillity; and though, at first, science proved more than a match for force, Etruria, with her free institutions, her elective magistracy, her solemn insignia, fell beneath their rude despotism.

Thus terminated, 480 years from the building of Rome, the only native school of art in Italy; and that here sculpture had been cultivated with no ordinary ardour, is attested by the fact of the Romans having carried off from Volsinum alone no fewer than two thousand statues. Even for some time after the subjugation of the Etruscan republics, sculpture was practised; but it soon lost all national character. The Roman dominion embracing the circuit of Italy, the Tuscan freeman and the Greek colonist became alike its vassal; but their common masters fostered not the arts as native ornaments — as moral causes in their empire: they possessed merely sufficient knowledge to value the fruits of genius as the harvest of conquest. The same spirit actuated their subsequent conduct, when their victorious armies came in successive contact with

the richer treasures of Sicily, and of Greece herself. Marcellus plundered Syracuse of her marble population, as a proof that he had subdued her living inhabitants; and, from a still more sordid motive, in which ignorance and avarice are disgustingly blended, Mummius first began the work of devastation in Greece. A picture of Bacchus, which the Corinthians, on account of its super-excellence, were anxious to regain from the soldiers, who were using it as a table, is said first to have excited his cupidity. From the vast sum offered, the Roman general conceived the picture contained gold, which he might perhaps discover when more at leisure; accordingly he delivered it to a common messenger, with this sage menace, that he was to carry it safely to Rome, under pain of being obliged to paint one equally good! Such was the state of early republican taste, quite in keeping with the national arts, sufficiently characterised by Tibullus, when he says:

‘In paltry temple stood the wooden god.’

Or by the opposition of Cato to the introduction of Greek statuary, on the plea, that its divine forms would expose to ridicule the rude fashioning of the Roman deities.

During the latter period of the commonwealth, attempts were successively made by Sylla, Pompey, and Cæsar, to domiciliate the arts in Rome. Their efforts, however, reached no farther than collecting in that capital the sculptors of Greece,—thus doubly unfortunate, as the place whence were torn the plundered ornaments of temples and palaces, and as the nurse of that science which, in busts and statues, was to immortalize the lineaments of her enslavers. The patronage of Augustus, who could wield for his purposes the energies of the whole enlightened world, necessarily proved highly advantageous to art, which he affected to cultivate from patriotic and intellec-

tual, but really from those still stronger political motives. But of all the sculptors of the Augustan age whose names have reached us, every one is Greek, and chiefly Athenian. Pasiteles, Arcesilaus, Zopirus, and Evander, were the most eminent. The arts, indeed, were revived; but the creative spirit which infuses life and soul into their productions, which stamps them with originality and thought, could not be recalled. The character of design and of execution is evidently the same as that by which the last era of sculpture in Greece is distinguished, or rather it is superior; for settled government, ample reward, and certain honor, not only drew to Rome every man of talent, but also awakened new powers. But in the finest specimens, there is no evidence of new energies, added by the union of two separate modifications of talent; nor in the inferior, any exhibition of the more original, though it might be ruder, efforts of an aspiring and distinct national taste. Either or both of these effects would have been apparent, had there been native, prior to this importation of Greek artists. On the contrary, everything in the sculpture of this era discovers a descent from a state of higher excellence; every touch exhibits rather what has been, than presages the eminence for which we are to draw upon futurity. From Augustus to Trajan, during a period of 140 years, the principles and practice of the Greeks continue to be observed, with such difference only as political causes can easily reconcile, but with a progressive decay. The most favorable periods during this space were the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Trajan; for the reign of Nero, whose taste, like his morals, was corrupt, which Pliny has assumed as an epoch in the Roman school, was propitious to practice, not to improvement.



With the reign of Hadrian, in the seventeenth year of the second century, is introduced a new style of sculpture, which may properly be termed Roman. Here the distinguishing characteristic is extreme minuteness of finish, indicating the labour more of the hand than the mind. The chisel, the file, the drill, have been plied with ceaseless care, and great mechanical dexterity. Over the whole genius and spirit of the art, is now diffused an air of studied and even affected refinement, which smooths away every characteristic and natural expression. For the sublime is substituted the difficult, the florid for the elegant; and in every remaining specimen, we can readily detect the taste which preferred a poetaster to Homer, or the laboured inanities of the sophists to the vigorous and manly eloquence of Demosthenes and Cicero.

The reign of the Antonines forms the last lucid interval in the arts of the ancient world. The decline of sculpture from thence to the reign of Constantine would be almost incredibly rapid, were we not enabled to trace its progress in the monuments that yet remain. Beyond Constantine it would not be difficult, but it would be useless, to carry our inquiries. When an imperial master of the world is found pilfering, from the monument of a virtuous predecessor, a few ornaments to deck the record of his own triumphs, and which the whole ingenuity of the Roman world could not supply, the annals of ancient taste may be closed.

Sculpture, it thus appears — and the remark is true of all the arts — was never cultivated in Rome as a native acquirement, as an integral element in national history. As political causes, too, the arts scarcely operated, except merely in connexion with public monuments, which were treated more as matters of business than of sentiment; where the successful execution brought no accession of



moral dignity to the artist, and where the modes long formed were adopted with no change, save that arising from decaying capabilities. Of all the nations, indeed, who have held supremacy upon the earth, the Romans show the poorest claims to originality ; and have least impressed the future fortunes of the human mind by any bold peculiarities or successful darings of her own genius. In letters and in the arts, they have bequeathed to posterity only modifications of the exquisite inventions of Greece. In letters, indeed, they have improved upon their borrowings, because in some instances they have imparted the stamp of nationality ; — not so in the fine arts. Yet even in the former, the improvement extends only to the manner ; the material remains with little alteration, and no addition. The character of Roman talent — manly and persevering, though not inventive — seemed well adapted to succeed in sculpture, laborious in its practice, in its principles grave and simple. Three causes chiefly opposed this success. The Romans regarded the art as the peculiar eminence of a conquered people. Hence they cherished no genuine enthusiasm for its excellences, and no real respect for its professors — among them the fallen Greeks or manumitted slaves. Secondly, Their national manners were inclined, while their spirit burned in its best energies, more to action and business than to elegant accomplishment. As a more particular obstacle, growing out of this general cause, the desire constantly affected of being represented in armour, most materially operated against the improvement of sculpture ; and by shutting up the warm and breathing forms of nature, gave at once origin and inveteracy to the evils of harshness and incorrectness, in the early school, and in the latter, to finical and ineffective laboriousness. Thirdly, The superlative beauty of the finest labours of Greece,

scattered with amazing profusion throughout Italy, rendered their possessors indifferent to contemporary and so conspicuously inferior works.

To this last circumstance, however, is principally to be ascribed the only excellence to which Roman sculpture can justly lay claim, as it proved mainly instrumental in directing attention to that particular department. The busts of the Roman school, from Julius to Gallienus, embracing a period of three centuries, exhibit a series invaluable in the history of art, and in some instances capable of being compared with the best of similar works of the first ages, without suffering by the contrast. These do not, indeed, equal in heroic character one or two remains of Greece, but they exhibit a more powerful representation of individual mental resemblance. The soul of history absolutely seems to inhabit and to breathe from the marble. Into every movement of the countenance is infused an expression so speaking, so characteristic, so full of individuality, that we seem to have set before us the very actor in those deeds which have formed our most serious studies. But this high perfection applies only to the termination of the commonwealth, or does not extend beyond the reign of Augustus. As we advance, the impress of grandeur of thought, and energy of purpose, becomes obscured. This in part is no doubt owing to the decline of power to represent; but the decay of internal nobleness in the subject appears to have at least kept pace with the fall of material art; and, in the words of Pliny, when there were no longer images of mind, the lineaments of form also degenerated.

From a careful examination of the imperial busts, — for the jealous fears of these tyrants soon forbade any others to be sculptured — we derive our best knowledge of the Roman school. The style of design during the first, or

republican age, is distinguished by squareness and vigour in the forms — decision of arrangement — boldness and firmness in pronouncing the parts, accompanied with truth and great force of general effect, but destitute of minuteness and accuracy in the details. The mastery of touch, indeed, is frequently so daring, as to be redeemed from the imputation of careless and unfinished only by the vigorous meaning of every stroke. We detect the greatest deficiency in those passing lines of thought and form, where little meets the outward sense, but in which the science and feeling of the artists are most surely displayed and most severely tried; the expression of the eyes are studied, and the eye-ball, with intent to produce an imposing look, is made larger than in nature. The hair, though skilfully massed, and fine in distant effect, is particularly heavy; indeed, the characteristic defect is harshness — an absence of those sweet and flowing lines which bring the contour fully, but graciously, upon the view. To the close of the first century, bold and facile execution, and force of effect, continue to take place of simple and accurate design and natural expression — faults most conspicuous in the most prosperous time, the reigns of Titus and Trajan, from the art being exercised chiefly on architectural designs. In addition to the dry, the hard, and laboured, the era of Hadrian is further distinguished by the pupil of the eye having a deeply drilled orifice, and by the separate parts of the countenance being marked with an affected and unnatural depth. The busts of Aurelius are the last good examples. Under Severus appears a singular affectation of marking the forehead, and even the whole countenance, with furrows. Subsequently every reign displays more decided retrogression, and the final disappearance of every redeeming excellence.

## CHAPTER VI.

WITH the dawn of liberty in the republican cities of Italy, we hail the reappearance of the arts. Before the close of the thirteenth century, Pisa, with the neighboring cities of Etruria, the ancient seats of elegance, had already made progress in sculpture. The founder of this, the primitive school of modern Europe, was Nicolo Pisano. The works of this master, and those of his scholars, still remaining in his native city, in Sienna, Arezzo, Pistoia, Orvieto, and Lucca, induce a very high opinion indeed of the progress of the age. In the succeeding century, the art was carried by his grandson, Andrea, to Florence, the future head and fountain of art. Here, in 1350, was established the first academy of design; and before the close of the century, sculpture was firmly established, and far from unskilfully practised, throughout a considerable portion of Italy. Nor was this the limit of the influence, though, as upon its centre, the eye of history is fixed chiefly here. Fraternities of itinerant sculptors carried their art over Germany and France; and even in England the works of this early school have been traced. In these countries the numerous Gothic edifices, with their sculptured ornaments, furnished rich occasions for the exercise of the art; but from this very circumstance it ceased, in a certain degree, to be regarded as independent of architecture. In Italy, private excellence was better preserved, and is easily traced. But it was union with the grand moral and political principles of free constitutions, that in Italy at once gave dignity to, and cherished the progress of, the arts. In the ancient world we bade a common farewell to freedom and to genius, nay, virtue at the



same time would have winged her flight, had she not found an asylum on earth in the bosom of Christianity. Upon the ages now passing in review, when Freedom again rises, we behold genius also revive, as if the sweeter sensibilities and the manlier virtues had together slumbered through the long long night of ignorance and of despotism. It is thus that spring, breathing on bank and wild wood, unchains the bud and the blossom from the tenderest floweret to the hardy oak.

In the progress of intelligence, the fifteenth century constitutes a splendid era. Advances were then accomplished in moral, intellectual, and political knowledge, which form the ground work of no inconsiderable portion of modern science. In the arts of elegance, especially in sculpture, the labours of this age will always hold distinguished rank. In the first year of the century, we find six great masters — competitors for the same public work — the bronze folding-doors of the baptistry at Florence: Brunelleschi and Ghiberti, Florentines; Jacomo della Quercia of Sienna; Nicolo Lamberti of Arezzo; Francisco di Valdambrino, and Simon dei Colle, Tuscans. The competitors each afterwards became the head of a flourishing school. Ghiberti, a youth of twentythree, was the successful candidate; and the work thus assigned to his superior merit, occupied forty years of his future life, remaining still one of the proudest triumphs of modern talent. The subjects are upon panels in relievo, representing historical passages from the Old and New Testaments, and the same which were afterwards declared worthy the gates of Paradise.

This era may be styled the commonwealth of sculpture; no single master so far excelling his compeers as to impress upon the art the stamp and bearing of one individual style. But among this crowd of illustrious contem-



poraries, Donatello, born in 1383, and already an eminent artist at the age of twenty, stands forth pre-eminently conspicuous by the magnitude and excellence of his own labours, as also by the number and merits of his pupils. His performances, in almost every variety of material, are scattered over all Italy; the best are in Florence, but the equestrian statue of Erasmus, Duke of Narni, in that city, merits attention as the first attempt of such magnitude in the revival of art.

The numerous scholars of Donatello may be divided into two classes. The first comprehends those who, without producing much of their own, have attained reputation as fellow-labourers in the most considerable undertakings of their master. The legitimate disciples of Donatello, however, consists of those who, without servilely following in the train of their instructor, preserved, or even in some respects improved, the science derived from his precepts. These include most of the leading masters of the latter part of the century, for in every town of importance he had left works and planted a school. After the demise of Ghiberti in 1455, and of Donatello in 1466, the art was far from languishing in the hands of their successors, and especially under Andrea du Verrochio, towards the close of the century. In the academy founded by the Medici, many of the most eminent men of the next century are to be found, as yet youthful though not undistinguished pupils.

In reviewing the ages which have been made to pass before us in their leading characters, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, we perceive, may be termed the infancy of sculpture; with the fifteenth begins its manhood, while in some respects full vigour was attained even at the close of this period. During the two preceding centuries, we find views frequently derived from the antique, of

which many specimens were brought directly from the East to Pisa. A character of truth and simplicity, faithful imitation of nature, and just expression, visibly begin from the time of Nicolo, whose own style indeed is remarkable for sweetness and absence of all pretension. The effect is never daringly ventured, but is sought to be discovered by patient reiteration of effort and persevering imitation. At first, therefore, no acknowledged principles of taste or of composition can be perceived; a degree of restraint and meagreness consequently long pervade the early labours of sculpture. But if in these the creative faculties have seldom been conspicuously exerted; if the fancy be rarely excited by novelty or variety of invention, the heart, even in the sculpture of the fourteenth century, is often awakened to deep feeling by unexpected beauties of the sweetest power, arising from a diligent imitation of nature. The art being chiefly dedicated to devotion, and to the memory of departed virtue, an air of dignified sincerity, a touching portraiture of the gentler affections, diffuse over the mind of the spectator a melancholy yet pleasing serenity, to be felt rather than described — which give back the images of our own sensibilities in all their simple, unpretending reality. The succeeding age assumes a style and character more elevated, without being less true. The simplicity is refined — equally removed from affectation as from poverty — the skill of hand great, the execution bold and felicitous; yet still exercised as a means, never as an instrument to astonish or surprise. Nature is imitated faithfully, under the least remote appearances, and by the simplest expression — the manner never allures from the subject. The great proportion of the sculpture of this century being in bronze, may account for a style of execution in some respects harsh, with a degree of restraint, and occasionally defective in energy.

As respects intellectual merits, the design is always chaste, often extremely elegant; the composition judicious, seldom contrasted or grouped artificially. The expression is sweet and calmly dignified, for rarely is strongly marked passion attempted. No decided aims at representation of abstract or ideal beauty can be observed; the powers of fancy are never presumed upon — seldom roused by remote associations. But the mind of the artist, now no longer entirely engrossed in mechanical detail, or confined by difficulties of mere representation, expatiates, selects, combines; if the forms and conceptions are not invested with the sublimity of ideal elevation, the beautiful models of real existence are imitated not unsuccessfully. Were the extent and object of art confined to simple imitation, the aim of the sculptor would now nearly be attained. Yet, judging even by the principles of the most refined criticism, one department, during the fifteenth century, acquired a perfection which has not been surpassed, rarely equalled, in succeeding times. Donatello and Ghiberti, the former in high, the latter in low relief, have left models which it does not easily appear possible to excel. The best of these are Donatello's, in the church of San Lorenzo, representing the most memorable events in the life of the Saviour; and Ghiberti's, already noticed, on the gates of the baptistry at Florence. The subjects seem to have imparted to the genius of the sculptors a portion of their own sacred dignity, and calm and holy feeling. Indeed, to the influence of religious impressions, we attribute, to a great degree, the improvement of sculpture during this age, the principal undertakings being from Scripture.

## CHAPTER VII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the very considerable attainments already exhibited, to the perfection of Sculpture, there yet wanted greater ease and grace of execution, more perfect and elevated expression, more refined selection of form and composition, — more, in short, of that heightening charm which fancy lends to reality — of that which constitutes the poetry, not the fiction, of art. The first blush of the times, too, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, seemed to promise a most propitious era for the accomplishment of these remaining improvements. In Italy, yet the only fixed and native seat of art, a spirit of refinement and love of elegance, a high and general respect for art, pervaded all ranks. Universal activity, also, and energy of character, growing out of the conscious dignity of independence, animated the republican cities. Each vied with its neighbour in the splendour of public buildings, and in munificence of patronage. Florence, indeed, from her peculiar advantages and superior opulence, sooner distanced rivalry; but her schools were open to all, and her Medici, the most enlightened of patrons, were as yet but merchants and simple citizens. In those states, too, where free and popular government was not established, kings and princes affected to love and encourage the arts. Literature, in most of the countries of Europe, had spread its lights around; the ancient models of eloquence were known, at least in their precepts, to all who laboured in the fields of genius; and even in sculpture, some of the most breathing fragments had been, or in the course of the century, were restored to day. The stir of spirit had penetrated even the recesses of papal



domination and priestly ease. Means of empire were now to be essayed more congenial to the complexion of the times, and to the minds of men, than spiritual weapons, unhallowed in every church, because unscriptural, or than — more unjustifiable still, when wielded by ministers of peace — secular arms. Rome was to be rendered the home and habitation of art, as of religion. She was to contain a temple vainly hoped to become the Zion of the Christian world. All these causes, favorable as they were to general developement of talent, tended with a peculiar energy to the advancement of sculpture, in which, with the exception of poetry, the greatest progress had yet been accomplished since the revival of intelligence. The path, too, which had here been pursued, led directly to excellence. Nothing was to be unlearned. The era bore a striking resemblance in its leading features to that of Pericles ; there was wanting only a Phidias to realize its expectancy ; and in Michael Angelo, the genius of Greece seemed to be supplied.

For three fourths of the sixteenth century, this extraordinary man presided in the schools, and by his style influenced much longer the principles of modern art. To him, therefore, during the most brilliant period in the annals which we are now feebly endeavoring to trace, is the attention chiefly directed. Nor only in one point of view, is his genius to be contemplated. He has extended the grasp of a mighty though irregular spirit over our whole subject. Sculptor of the Moses, painter of the Last Judgment, architect of the Cupola — we behold in him the greatest of the works of art. It is this, more than any other circumstance, which has invested the character of his genius with a species of awful supremacy not to be inquired into ; discrimination is lost in general admiration ; and to him who thus seems to bear away the palm

of universal talent, we are inclined to concede the foremost rank in each separate pursuit. His productions, thus dominating among the labours of man, bewilder the judgment both by their real and their apparent magnitude. Thus some giant cliff, rising far above minor elevations, while it serves as a landmark to the traveller, misleads his conceptions of its own distance and immediate relations of site.

Here it appears the proper, or at least simplest method, to present such gradual unfolding of the subject as each branch separately may seem to require, reserving a general view for such place as shall give the reader full command of the joint influences, bearings, and consequences of these details.

In sculpture, the works of Michael Angelo are divided between Rome and Florence. They are not numerous, and few are even finished. Impatience of slowly progressive labour, united with indomitable activity and unwearied industry — fastidiousness of fancy, and exalted perceptions of excellence, joined with a reckless daring in execution, form singular distinctions of intellectual temperament. Hence have sprung the characteristic beauties and the besetting errors of his style in sculpture — a style discovering much that is derived from liberal and enlightened study of the sublime and graceful in nature, but still more of those qualities which arise from the peculiarities of an individual and erratic, though rich and powerful, imagination. Rarely do his statues exhibit that simplicity and repose essential to beauty in an art — grave, dignified, or even austere, and possessing means comparatively limited and uniform. Forced and constrained attitude, proportions exaggerated, expression awful, gloomy, and unearthly, forms of unnatural, of superhuman energy — these constitute the ideal of his composition. In giv-

ing visible existence to these ideas, his execution is most wonderful. A force, a fire, an enthusiasm, elsewhere unfelt, unknown, give to every limb and lineament, a vitality, a movement, resembling more the sudden mandate of inspiration, than a laborious and retarded effort. The first impressions created by these works are thus irresistibly powerful; but they startle, surprise, astonish — do not soothe, delight, and satisfy the mind. An influence originating solely in the imagination, and in which the sensibilities of the heart have little interest, cannot long retain its power; the ordinary tone of feeling returns, and amid the unquiet and aspiring composition seeks for nature and repose.

If the productions and style of Michael Angelo be compared with the great standards of excellence and of truth in sculpture — nature, and the remains of ancient art, he will be found to have deviated widely from both, or rather, perhaps, he has rendered both subservient to his own particular views of each. He has created to himself modes of imitation, which should in themselves claim a paramount importance, independent of all archetypes; while these latter are connected with the originals of reality, only as an intermediate step to the realms of fancy. Hence, round a false, though gorgeous and imposing art, his genius has swept a magic circle, within whose perilous bound no inferior spirit has dared with impunity to tread. Unfortunately, however, such was the fascination produced in his own age, when the forcible and imaginative were admired above the simple and the true, that his works became a standard by which the past was to be tried, and the future directed. As a necessary consequence, a prodigious and irreparable lapse was prepared for the art. The imitation of a natural style will ever be productive of good; it will ultimately lead to no imitation, by conducting

to the primeval source. The very reverse is the effect of following a guide such as Buonarotti, who has departed from nature farther, we will venture to say, than any great name on record, whether in literature or in art. Irregularities and imperfections in almost every other instance of lofty genius, are forgotten amid the deep-thrilling pathos, or soothing loveliness, of natural expression; but amid the awe-inspiring, the commanding, the overpowering representations of the Tuscan, the soul languishes for nature. His creations are not of this world, nor does feeling voluntarily respond to the mysterious and uncontrollable mastery which they exert over it. The cause and progress of this dereliction of nature can also be traced. He had marked the perplexities and constraint under which his predecessors had laboured, in their endeavors to unite the forms and expressions of living nature with images of ideal beauty, overlooking the productions of classic sculpture, in which this union is so happily accomplished: because to his vigorous, rather than refined perceptions, its simplicity appeared poverty, he fearlessly struck into a line of art, where all was to be new — vehement — wonderful.

From the antique, besides simplicity, Michael Angelo has deviated in another important, and, indeed, vital respect; a deviation, indeed, which changes completely the very aspect of art. Of the two elements of sculptural design — form and expression — the ancients selected form as the principal object of their representation: the modern has preferred expression, to which he may be said almost to have sacrificed form; or rather, he has so contorted his figures, by the violence of their emotions, that all is expression, and that of the most vehement kind. Here, however, it may be asked, how far has prescription the power to determine this matter? To this it may be replied, that not only the associations springing from the



most perfect of human works were opposed to this choice, but also the internal proprieties of the art favour the selection of the ancients. In sculpture all is staid, enduring, actual; movement alone is the only passing object of imitation. Expression, therefore, at least strong and individual expression, as a primary characteristic — as destructive of symmetry, and as implying an effort ungraceful, when connected with unyielding materials, seems not a legitimate beauty of higher art. Indeed, passion is inconsistent with the beautiful in form, or the dignified in sentiment. A sweetly pleasing, a gently agitating excitement, or a nobly repressed feeling, visible only in the resolve of soul, and mastering of sorrow, is the true and the only proper expression in sculpture. Grief alone seems to be admissible in its deepest pathos.

Considered in connexion with the impetuous style of his composition, nothing can be finer than the execution of Michael Angelo. It participates in, it harmonizes with, his ardent temperament of mind; rapid, impatient, fervid, it seems to animate and create, rather than form, the breathing conceptions. But taken alone, it discovers many technical peculiarities and imperfections. From having sometimes merely sketched, or, at most, modelled the subject in small, nay, in some instances, with no other suggestion or guide, save the accidental shape of the block, he struck into the marble. It was impossible, under these circumstances, to avoid error. While the hand, the eye, the mind, were thus in instant exertion; while propriety of expression and beauty of outline, mechanical detail, and general effect, grandeur of the whole, and propriety of parts, were at once to be studied, and that, too, where each stroke removes what never can be again united — imperfection was almost a necessary consequence. Hence the want of proportion so conspicuous in many of his best

works — in the Moses even ; hence so few finished ; hence, too, his statues, like paintings, seldom present more than one point of view. As regards more individual details ; in the salient lines of the contours, the circles have rarely their just value, and the surfaces want their proper fulness. Partly to compensate this deficiency in the advancing curves, partly as a characteristic distinction, which consists in strongly pronouncing the muscles, the retiring lines, or muscular depressions, are expressed in exaggerated depth. Trusting to mechanical dexterity, also, and to a profound science, he was frequently reduced to work without model, or reference to the living form. This produces a rigidity, a want of feeling, and a mannerism, in his best performances even, the commencement of those conventional modes which finally superseded all diligent study of nature, and led to the abandonment of every genuine grace of sculpture.

The style and character of composition now described is evidently one of study and acquisition ; we might therefore expect a gradation to be apparent in the works from which we have deduced our remarks. Accordingly, the earlier performances of the artist retain much of the simplicity and truth of the fifteenth century, exhibiting, at the same time, much of the better part of the qualities now described as the peculiar characteristics of the school. These we are inclined, upon the whole, to regard, if not the most splendid, as the most correct examples of Michael Angelo's powers. His later and more important labours present, in their full maturity, the peculiar modes of thought and execution which constitute the principles of this era. A regular gradation, however, is scarcely to be traced, since, in his very old age, he perceived and lamented the brilliant but fatal errors of his style ; and, in the few works then finished, a degree of sobriety and

chasteness is observed. He saw and lamented, too late, the fall prepared for sculpture.

Of the works of this master at Florence, the Bacchus, notwithstanding the undignified expression of inebriety, is the most correct in its forms, and the least mannered in composition. The tombs of the Medici show much of whatever is most splendid, and what is most reprehensible in the genius of their author. They might indeed be selected as special illustrations of the general views just given. Every figure — there are six — bears the strong impress of a spirit delighting in the great and the wonderful — an imagination eager in the pursuit of untried modes of existence, and a consciousness of power to execute the most daring conceptions. Intelligence in science, breadth of touch, boldness of manner, fearlessness of difficulty, unite to give life and movement to attitudes the most remote from such as nature would voluntarily assume, or graceful design select. Rome contains the most perfect and the most wonderful of Michael Angelo's statues. The Pietà, or Virgin and Dead Saviour, in St Peter's, finished in his twentyfourth year, is not only at the head of the first division of his works, but, on the whole, is the least exaggerated, and the most natural of all. The Moses, on the tomb of Julius II., amid the creations of genius, rises a solitary and matchless monument. Without model among the productions of antiquity, it has remained inimitable and unimitated in modern times. Neither in nature do we find its prototype: it is the extraordinary conception of an extraordinary mind. Thus isolated by its own peculiar sublimity of character, this statue exhibits a striking resemblance of the imagination whence it derived existence. We behold a being who awes, who subdues, yet who fails to interest — for with such humanity entertains no communion of feeling. Here the sublime is too

exclusively sought in the vehement and the marvellous; every effort is forced, every trait exaggerated, and the whole shows a daring originality verging on the extravagant and the false. The solemn majesty — the dignified repose — the commanding simplicity, admired in ancient sculpture — those milder beauties which sentiment alone can appreciate — those exalted and touching graces which arise from elegance or nobleness of form — from refined and subdued expression — from elevated yet genuine nature, in the Moses are looked for in vain.

Than Michael Angelo, no artist has ever exerted a more extensive influence, or more deeply impressed his peculiar views, upon art. Indeed, so much is this the case, that, during the sixteenth century, not a single sculptor appears who is not to be ranked either as a disciple or imitator. Even to this our own time, the influence in some respect continues. In sculpture more than in painting or architecture, though for the first he did less than for the second art, was his genius paramount. Of contemporaries, then, and successors, from his death in 1564, to the end of the century, the only distinction is between those who imitated and those who studied under this great leader. Among the most eminent of the former was Baccio Bandinelli, a rival, who contended with less generous weapons than those of talent: yet he must receive justice, — as a sculptor he is second only, sometimes hardly inferior, to Buonarroti. Baccio di Monte Lupo was an original artist of considerable power. Andrea Contucci founded the school of Loretto. Francisco Rustici, an excellent founder, more eminent still as the master of Leonardo da Vinci, carried the manner of this school into France, dying at Paris in 1550. Giacomo Tatti, better known as Sansovino, presided over the Venetian works of sculpture and architecture with much reputation, having studied along



with Michael Angelo at Rome, whence he fled in 1527, on the sack of that capital by Bourbon. He survived the great Florentine, and became founder of a numerous and respectable school, where Cattaneo and Vittoria supported the credit of their instructor: the latter perfected working in stucco. In Milan, Agostino Busti, and Guglielmo della Porta, were highly distinguished, especially the latter; as were also, in Naples, Marliano Nola, and Garolamo St Croce. In these schools, however, we trace the most rapid decay of the art, in simplicity and correct design, from the splendour of the courts demanding employment of the arts on objects of temporary interest, when rapidity was preferred to excellence of execution.

Among the real disciples of the Florentine, the following were the chief:—Raphael di Monte Lupo, a favorite pupil, who assisted his master in the tomb of Julius, the greatest undertaking in modern sculpture, if completed; Nicolo di Tribulo, an excellent founder, by whom are the bronze doors of the cathedral at Bologna; Giovanni del Opera, whose name is significant of his industry; Danti, the closest imitator of his instructor. Ammanati subsequently transferred his attention to architecture. Giovanni di Bologna, a Frenchman by birth, an Italian as a sculptor, was the most eminent of all the scholars of Michael Angelo; and, on the death of the latter, continued to be the leading master in Europe till the end of the century.

Beyond the confines of Italy, the art had yet made few advances worthy of notice; and what little had been accomplished was upon the principles of the Tuscan school. Thus, at the close of the sixteenth century, the genius and principles of Michael Angelo extended their influence over the whole of Europe. During the last thirty years of this era, however, the art had been on the decline. These principles could be maintained only by that genius

by which they had been invented and matured ; and by it alone could the errors of the system be consecrated or concealed.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

THE seventeenth century thus rose with few favorable presages for sculpture. The Group of Hercules and the Centaur, set up in Florence the last year of the former era, serves to show a considerable falling off in the intellectual qualities, while it displays also many improvements and facilities introduced into the technical principles and modes of mechanical operation. These are the last beauties to linger in the lapse of talent. External circumstances, also, both moral and political, had become less favorable. The states of Italy were either no longer alive to the same motives which had induced a cultivation of sculpture, or, with the loss of liberty, had lost also the desire of prosecuting the measures of public aggrandizement. The ascendancy of painting, likewise, was hostile to the recovery of a manly and accurate style of design in the sister art ; while the spirit of philosophical inquiry, which came abroad in the seventeenth century, was inimical to the fine arts generally. It must, however, be acknowledged, that the great sources of decline originated in the state of the art itself. Indeed, when a high degree of excellence has been attained in any art, a rapid and sudden retrogression will always be found to indicate the operation of external influences ; at the same time, such

falling off must always be preceded by, and is in part the result of, internal corruption in the principles of composition or of criticism.

A crowd of undistinguished names followed the dissolution of the great Tuscan school. And when at length an artist of decided talent appeared, instead of retracing the steps of his predecessors, he struck into a new path, conducting still more pronely to error. Bernini, born at Naples in 1598, though immeasurably inferior to the mighty master of the last century in majesty and energy of mind, possessed most of the requisites for becoming one of the greatest of modern sculptors. Unfortunately, he neglected, or was ignorant of, the species of invention which belongs to an imitative art; and choosing rather to be the founder of a sect, than rank among the fathers of regular art, he employed his endowments only to throw a meretricious splendour round the caprices of a silly and affected manner. His powers of execution were wonderful, his fertility of fancy exuberant, but they were under control neither of regulated judgment nor of manly taste. To Bernini, the conceptions of ancient simplicity seemed poverty and meagreness. The compositions of Michael Angelo he deemed more forcible, but too severe in character. His aim consequently was, to erect a third style, which should possess distinctive qualities, displaying greater strength and energy than, to his taste, the former presented, while it surpassed the latter in suavity and grace. In pursuit of these imaginary excellences, he deviated, and by his talents or patronage carried art along with him, still farther from the simple, the true, and the natural. To produce effect, by whatever means of startling attitude, voluminous drapery, forced expression, became the sole object of study — means the most improper for sculpture. The works of Bernini are very numerous, for

his opportunities as master of the works to several successive Popes were extensive. All are composed in the same false and flattering taste.

Contemporaries were generally imitators. Algard and Fiammingo, however, preserved the dignity of independent, and, in a certain degree, merited the praise of original minds. The former has produced the largest, but not the best, relievo of modern art; the latter is most happy in the representation of children, which, to use the words of Rubens, 'Nature, rather than art, appears to have sculptured; the marble seems softened into life.'

To Bernini, who died in 1680, Camilla Rusconi, a Milanese, succeeded in the throne of sculpture during the remainder of the seventeenth, and a considerable portion of the early part of the eighteenth century. Following the same principles as his greater predecessor, but with talents much inferior, in the hands of Rusconi deterioration of taste became proportionably more rapid, while the influence of external circumstances was also adverse. Italy was already filled with statues, and no undertakings of magnitude presenting, the art continued to languish during the greater part of the last century, suffering both from defect of principle, and poverty of means.

During the time that has elapsed, Transalpine sculpture scarcely demands our notice. In France, we first discover the art separately and extensively practised: for in other countries it was associated with ornamental architecture. The expeditions of Charles VIII. and the personal predilections of Francis, had introduced among their subjects some knowledge of Italian refinement; and so early as the middle of the sixteenth century, French sculptors of considerable eminence appear. Jean Gougon completed the celebrated Fountain of the Innocents in 1550. The works of a contemporary, Jean Cousin, show some



grace and delicacy, but want strength and correctness. German Pilon assimilates very closely to the style of the Tuscan masters in energetic detail, but is destitute of simplicity and natural expression. Jacques D'Angouleme had merit, but not enough to warrant the statement of native historians, that he defeated Michael Angelo in a trial of skill. Towards the conclusion of this century, Giovanni di Bologna filled the whole of France with the principles of his former master ; and his own pupils continued to maintain similar, though inferior, practice to the golden age of refinement in France — the reign of Louis XIV. Of this school, two artists, Girardon and Puget, claim to be the head. The former, though we cannot say with Voltaire, ' il a égalé tout ce que l'antiquité a de plus beau,' has yet great merit. His manner of design, with a degree of hardness, is yet noble, and though cold, is more correct than that of his contemporaries, as appears from the tomb of Richelieu. Puget, in every respect the opposite as to intellectual temperament, is the favorite of his countrymen. *Sculpteur, Architecte, et Peintre*, as they, after the historian of Louis XIV., are fond of representing him, for the sake of comparison with Buonarotti, though what he painted, or what he built, does not appear, is yet not dissimilar in the fiery energetic character of his composition, and in his handling, bold and full of movement ; but his expression is studied, his science inaccurate, his forms wanting in nobleness and grace. Sarasin was a most esteemed contemporary, and, in the Caryatides of the Louvre, has equalled the best sculpture of France. To the schools of the two first mentioned, however, and especially of Puget, in style at least, are to be referred the succeeding artists of France, as Les Gros, Theodon, Le Peintre, Desjardins, Coysevaux, Vaucleve, the two Coustous, all flourishing at the close of

the seventeenth, and during the early part of the eighteenth century. The last of this list is Bouchardon, under Louis XV.; for though his unfortunate successor inclined to patronise talent, the excesses of the Revolution proved not less injurious to living art, than destructive of ancient monuments. Among the latest works previous to this horrid outbreaking, was the statue of Voltaire, by Pigal, now in the library of the Institute, and upon which the following severe epigram was composed :—

Pigal au naturel represente Voltaire —  
 Le squelette à la fois offre l'homme et l'auteur.  
 L'œil qui le voit sans parure étrangère  
 Est effrayé de sa maigreur !

Bermudez, the historian of Spanish art, enumerates a splendid list of native sculptors from the commencement of the sixteenth century. This, however, is scarcely consistent with the fact, that not till 1558, in consequence of a royal edict, was this esteemed a liberal profession, or admitted to any privileges as such. It is easy to perceive indeed, that national partiality, or that adventitious magnitude which every subject is apt to acquire in the estimation of the writer, has led, in this instance, to consider as artists, those who have with remarkable success been employed in ornamenting the fine ecclesiastical edifices in Spain, beyond which they are little known. Berruguete, a pupil of Michael Angelo, appears to have founded the first regular school, of which Paul de Cespides was the ornament, as he is of the national sculpture.

Before the seventeenth century, Germany makes no appearance in a general history of sculpture; and even now she is more celebrated for her writers on the philosophy, than for her artists in the practice, of the art. Still the genius of the nation we should be inclined to estimate

as highly favorable to its future advancement. In Vienna, Rauchmüller; in Silesia, Leigebe; at Berlin, Schluter, Millich, Barthel, and others, have proved this estimate not unfounded. While our more immediate contemporaries, Ohnmacht, Sonnenschein, Nahl, the two Shadofs, especially the younger, whose *Spinning Girl* is one of the most exquisite imitations of simple nature which modern art can show, do not discourage this hope; if indeed artists be not carried away by that unnatural striving after marvellous effect, which has wrought so much injury to common sense and right feeling in German literature.

On reviewing the history of modern sculpture during its rise and perfection, to the decline immediately antecedent to the present century, we find that, from the commencement of the fifteenth century, when the art began to rank among national causes of exertion and feeling, progress towards perfection, and in the most direct path, was rapid. Hence it has been the singular distinction of the sculptors of this period, to have left models in their own works, while their previous discoveries enabled those who immediately followed also to produce models. They have thus remained original in an age of originality. During the sixteenth century, causes more remotely connected with real patriotism — an ostentatious desire of splendour, not an unaffected love of refinement — operated in the promotion of the arts; and in Sculpture, in particular, the artificial excitement imparted a portion of its spirit to its effects. From the age of Michael Angelo inclusive, we find that the desire of novelty; a continued endeavor to extend the boundaries of art, by the introduction of imaginary perfections inconsistent with its real character and excellence, were the rocks on which was made fatal shipwreck of truth, of simplicity, and of beauty. These imagined improvements were directed to the

acquisition of two grand objects. A style of composition was aimed at, more purely ideal, less connected with nature, than is to be found in the remains of the ancient, or in the works of the early modern masters. Genius hovered on the very confines of credibility and of the impossible, deriving the elements of its creations from imaginings awful and imposing, embodied in forms of gloomy sublimity and power, overwhelming — not awakening — to the human sympathies. As characteristics of this imaginative style, the proportions are enlarged, the expressions forced, and action and energy are given, destructive of grace and reality. Art is raised to regions where nature is unknown, and where the very highest exertions of intellect and fancy could hardly sustain interest. This was more especially the style of the Tuscan school, and it fell with its great founder, who had placed the art on this dangerous height. But, in the second place, sculpture was sought to be assimilated to painting, and merit was estimated by the extent to which imitation was carried — in difficulty and variety of effect, in complicated detail, in volume of drapery, and, latterly, even in facility of production. This taste first began decidedly in the school of Bernini, and exclusively cherished the powers of mechanical execution, in preference to the unobtrusive but essential beauties of purity and correctness of design. Hence the rapid decline; for statues soon became merely confused masses of drapery, without drawing, and without science. Still the chisel was wielded with great mechanical dexterity; but before the middle of the eighteenth century, every moral beauty, sentiment, truth, feeling, had disappeared from the labours of the sculptor.



## CHAPTER IX.

ART has never been reformed, after a lapse from high eminence, by mere imitation of examples, however excellent; nor by only following rules for the correction of error. It is here as in morals, example succeeds where precept would fail. Some mind of uncommon firmness and good sense is required, who, beginning with nature, brings to the work of reformation original powers and severe judgment; fancy and feeling, with correctness and cultivated taste: one, in short, of those rare minds whose merits, great in themselves, become incomparably greater viewed with the times in which they commenced their career; whose exertions, wonderful in their own accomplishments, are yet more admirable from the progress which thereby others have been enabled to effect. Such a genius was that possessed by Canova, a name venerable alike for virtue and for talents. Born, in 1757, in a distant and otherwise unknown hamlet, in the territory of Treviso — fallen upon evil days in his art — of the most obscure parentage, destined to fill the humble and laborious occupation of village stone-cutter — remote, in the first instance, from every advice and assistance, he rose to be the companion of princes, the restorer of art, and the generous patron of merit friendless as his own. We know not whether more to love or to admire Canova. In his fifteenth year, repairing to Venice, the cloisters of a convent supplied him, through the benevolence of the good fathers, with a work-shop; and only fifteen years afterwards, through a struggle of poverty, yet redeemed by prudence and industry, and sweetened by independence, he erected in St Peter's the monument of Ganga-

nelli — the first fruits of a spirit, whose sobriety of temperament, more valuable and more rare than mere original invention, here exhibited a correctness which would amend, with a vigour which would elevate, a fallen age.

A series of more than two hundred compositions, of which this was the first, standing itself nobly conspicuous, yet only a step from previous imbecility, presents too extensive a field for particular description, or minute examination. The remembrance is yet fresh upon our memory, when, arranged in a funereal hall, representations of these works might well have been deemed the labours of a generation; and while now about to describe the originals, we bear in recollection, that to view these a considerable portion of Europe has been traversed. Thus numerous, and widely extending the influence of their style, these productions certainly, require careful notice. Avoiding details, then, we shall class them under Heroic subjects; Compositions of softness and grace — Monumental erections and Relievos.

The superiority of Canova has been questioned in the first of these departments only. He has been admitted a master of the beautiful — hardly of the grand. Or rather, perhaps, while his claims have been universally recognised in representing the softer graces of loveliness, his powers in the sublimities of severe and masculine composition are less generally appreciated. This estimation is unjust, having been originated and maintained by causes entirely extrinsic to the genius or labours of the artist. In not one, but many groups and single statues, he has attained some of the loftiest aims of sculpture. In manly and vigorous beauty of form, the Perseus; in forceful expression and perfection of science, the Pugilists — a work, in its peculiar range, one of the most classical of modern art; in harmonious and noble composition, uniting nature and

poetic feeling, the Theseus combating the Centaur; in the terrible of sentiment and suffering, the Hercules; — these, with the Ajax, Hector, Paris, Palamedes, all belonging to the grand style of art, may challenge comparison with any works of the modern chisel, in the beauties of sustained effect, learned design, boldness yet exquisite delicacy of execution; while as to number, the series here is unparalleled in the history of any single mind. In the majestic or venerable realities of portraiture, again, there is Napoleon, Pius VI., Washington, Ganganelli, Rezzonico.

In the second department, the compositions of Canova have enriched modern art with the most glowing conceptions of elegance and grace; raised, and yet more refined, by the expression of some elevating or endearing sentiment. Here, indeed, has been allotted his peculiar and unapproachable walk. Yet it may justly be doubted, whether he be not superior in the former class, where his merit has hitherto been denied or doubted. True, one or two works in the second, as the Venus recumbent, the Nymph, and Cupid, are superior, as examples of beauty and grace, to any one of masculine character which might be compared with them; but, as a class, the second is less uniformly dignified and excellent than the first. The great defect here, indeed, is a want of dignity in the female figures; which, though equally removed from the flimsy affectations of his immediate predecessors, as from the robust and austere proportions of the Tuscan school, are not always free from the meagre and the cold where grace is to be united with sweetness. This seems to be occasioned by a want of harmony between the just height and roundness of the forms — from an absence of those firm, yet gracious contours, meeting, yet eluding the eye, rounded into life and dissolving in the animated marble, which render, for instance, the Medicean so incomparably

superior to the Venus of Canova. Throughout the whole of this class, there frequently runs a character of composition too ornate — too elaborately pleasing, and which would appear still more decidedly, were it not accompanied by inimitable ease, and were not every part, even to the minutest ornament, an emanation of the same refined taste and cultivated mind. It is this, chiefly, which spreads their delightful charm of consistency over these works; there is, on close examination, little derived immediately and simply from nature. Every choice has finally, but not obviously, been determined after much thought and many trials. All is that perfection of art, by which art itself is best concealed, and which to its creations lends the enchantment of nature's own sweetest graces.

In the monumental series of works, Canova displays all the practical excellences of his genius, with more, perhaps, of originality and simplicity than generally characterise his other labours. This class consists of architectural elevations, supporting colossal statues, and of tablets in relievo. Of the former, the tombs of the Popes at Rome, of Alfieri at Florence, and of the Archduchess Maria Christina at Vienna, are magnificent examples. The second constitutes a numerous and very beautiful class, which, though composed of nearly the same simple elements of design, a female figure, or a genius, in basso relievo, mourning over a bust or an urn, yet exhibit much diversity of character and arrangement. From each of these an example might be selected in the tomb of the Archduchess, and the grand relievo of the O'Hara family mourning over the funereal couch of the deceased daughter and wife — equal to anything in the whole compass of art. To those who deny the merit of Canova in relief, we recommend the study of this monument. The former,



representing a procession bearing to the tomb the ashes of the dead, is one of the most arduous and noblest compositions extant; and, judging from our own impressions, no record of mortality ever better accomplished its purpose, whether to awaken regret for departed virtue, or to tell, by its own perfection, that in man there exists an intelligence which shall survive beyond the grave.

Although, from the series of works briefly mentioned, it would not be difficult to prove Canova the most indefatigable — nor, when we consider their influence, the principles they are calculated to enforce, and the fallen state from which they rescued art, the most respectable — of modern sculptors; yet, in estimating truly the rank and constituents of his genius, there is no small difficulty. The very fertility of that genius, diffusing its richness over every province of the art, and, in each varied exercise, constantly displaying the same judgment and taste, increases this difficulty, by blending into one harmonious and regular effect, those outbreakings of peculiar energies usually accompanying, and indicative of, great powers. Hence the character of his mind might be pronounced, at first, as distinguished rather by correctness than by force. Yet, of his talents generally, such would be an erroneous estimate. His mind was deeply imbued with both fire and enthusiasm; his imagination, uncommonly active, was stored with materials, but over the treasures thus lavishly poured forth by fancy, severe scrutiny was held by the understanding. Energetic, and even rapid, in composition, in correcting, and finally determining, he was slow and fastidious — often changing, but always improving. Such intellectual organization is by no means favorable to that grandeur usually associated with highest genius, which frequently hurrying alike the artist and spectator beyond reality, derives its very mastery from daring disregard of

rule, grasping, with dangerous hardihood, those lofty graces, pardoned only when successful; and even then, however they may elevate the individual subject or artist, not enriching art with useful examples or solid acquisitions. But a mind thus constituted was eminently fitted for correcting public taste, especially in the serene majesty, the orderly magnificence, which compose the true grandeur of Sculpture. Hence Canova is uniformly dignified and consistent; correct without coldness, if he rarely attains the highest sublimity; neither does he fall beneath himself, nor into the extravagant. Compared with the ancients, many of his works remind us of more than merely casual imitation; but it is no less true, that in others of novel invention, he has applied, in not unsuccessful rivalry, their own principles, the discovery of which forms his highest praise, as constituting one of the most essential services ever rendered to Sculpture. Among the moderns he claims pre-eminence, as the first who established improvement upon genuine and universal precepts of art.

The perfection to which Canova seems to have aspired in the ideal, appears to have been the union of the two elements of sculptural design, keeping each in just subordination to beauty. Hence, in his figures, form does not, as in the antique, constitute so entirely the primary, and almost sole thought, neither is it so much subservient to action and effect, as in the most eminent of the modern masters. In like manner, the expression holds an intermediate character between the unmoved serenity of the ancients, and the marked lineaments of Michael Angelo. In some instances this union is very happily accomplished; but generally, though always true, the expression is not often simple. The only defect which can be discerned in Canova's selection of form, and which is more espe-

cially to be found in his female, is a meagreness and want of vigour ; sometimes they too much remind us of the individual model, and of those manners of life whence such models are usually obtained. But speaking universally, the contours of this master are full, flowing, and well sustained. And here we can discover the same principles of design and practice which were pointed out in the best era of the Grecian schools, with this novel precept, the discovery, or at least uniformly successful application, of which belongs to Canova, namely, that all grand parts may be resolved into a primary and two secondary forms. As this ternary combination is sweetly, yet decidedly marked, blending yet separating its constituent lines, the graceful ease and infinite variety of natural outline is obtained. In every statue of the modern, also, we find exemplified the principle adopted from Phidias, and already noticed, namely, that from whatever resources of imagination any figure may be composed, the final surface — all that meets the eye at last — must be finished, and faithfully imitated from individual nature.

There is still one characteristic which pre-eminently distinguishes those works we are examining, namely, the exquisite beauty of composition. They unite the dexterity and force which constituted the peculiar praise of the masters of the sixteenth century, with a delicacy, a refinement, and truth, exclusively their own. This is an excellence of the highest import — not so much in itself as in its consequences — for it can be introduced with good effect only when the nobler elements of composition are present. A statue defective in the higher qualities of art, would by high finish become only the more ungracious : works of unblemished merit only admit with advantage of elaborate technicality. Hence, among the ancients, the perfect statues, in all other respects, are also the most

highly wrought. This excellence Canova seems to have been the first to remark and to emulate, which he has done successfully, especially in the most difficult parts — the extremities.

In short, when we view Canova in himself and in his works singly, isolated from the age that preceded, and separated from that which now follows his own, in concentrated energy and originality of mind, he may hardly compare with Donatello, still less with Buonarotti, perhaps not with our own Flaxman; but when we estimate his genius in the varied, yet uniform excellence of his labours, in the principles upon which these are conducted, — when we recollect the state of degradation in which he found, and the elevated condition in which he left art; and remember, too, that his own works and practice between these extremes, were marked by no false splendors of talent, but must prove a shining light, guiding to yet higher attainment; we must pronounce, in truth and gratitude, that none other name is in merit so inseparably associated with the progress of sculpture.

Since the death of his illustrious contemporary, Thorwaldsen, born at Copenhagen, 1771–2, has occupied the public eye as head of the modern school. The character and powers of this master are doubtless of a very elevated rank; but neither in the extent nor excellence of his works, do we apprehend his station to be so high as sometimes placed. The genius of the Danish sculptor is forcible, yet is its energy derived more from peculiarity than from real excellence. His ideal springs less from imitation of the antique, or of nature, than from the workings of his own individual mind — it is the creation of a fancy seeking forcible effect in singular combinations, rather than in general principles; therefore hardly fitted to excite lasting or beneficial influence upon the age. Simplicity and im-



posing expression seem to have hitherto formed the principal objects of his pursuit ; but the distinction between the simple and rude, the powerful and the exaggerated, is not always observed in the labours of the Dane. His simplicity is sometimes without grace ; the impressive — austere, and without due refinement. The air and contours of his heads, except, as in the Mercury — an excellent example both of the beauties and defects of the artist's style — when immediately derived from antiquity, though grand and vigorous, seldom harmonize in the principles of these efforts with the majestic regularity of general nature. The forms, again, are not unfrequently poor, without vigorous rendering of the parts, and destitute at times of their just roundness. These defects may in some measure have arisen from the early and more frequent practice of the artist in relievos. In this department, Thorwaldsen is unexceptionably to be admired. The Triumph of Alexander, originally intended for the frieze of the government palace at Milan, notwithstanding an occasional poverty in the materials of thought, is, as a whole, one of the grandest compositions in the world ; while the delicacy of execution, and poetic feeling, in the two exquisite pieces of Night and Aurora, leave scarcely a wish here ungratified. But in statues, Thorwaldsen excels only where the forms and sentiment admit of uncontrolled imagination, or in which no immediate recourse can be had to fixed standards of taste, and to the simple effects of nature. Hence, of all his works, as admitting of unconfined expression, and grand peculiarity of composition, the statues of the Apostles, considered in themselves, are the most excellent. Thorwaldsen, in fine, possesses singular, but in some respects erratic genius. His ideas of composition are irregular ; his powers of fancy surpass those of execution ; his conceptions seem to lose a portion of their value and fresh-

ness in the act of realisation. As an individual artist, he will command deservedly a high rank among the names that shall go down to posterity. As a sculptor, who will influence, or has extended the principles of the art, his pretensions are not great; or, should this influence and these claims not be thus limited, the standard of genuine and universal excellence must be depreciated in a like degree.

We have hitherto made little or no mention of British sculpture, for two reasons. The number of ancient monuments of the art with which the cathedrals of England, and Westminster Abbey in particular, are ornamented, is considerable: yet very little is known regarding their authors. There is reason to believe, however, that by far the greater part are the work of foreigners, members of those confraternities of itinerant artists, which have been noticed as existing in Italy so early as the middle of the fourteenth century. This opinion is corroborated by the circumstance, that the object in these societies was to undertake buildings in whatever country, and for this purpose were composed of architects, sculptors, workers in mosaic, builders, designers, each strictly attending to his own department, except the architect, who seems to have acted as the general overseer. Thus, companies of individuals, more or less numerous, were engaged by the proper ecclesiastical authorities, wherever a building of magnitude was to be erected. Of this, the plan appears uniformly to have been prescribed by the ecclesiastics, the foreign masters superintending and availing themselves of local assistants for the mere workmanship. Again, between the early productions of sculpture in England, when these first attract notice by their excellence, we very decidedly trace the style, and in some instances, as in the beautiful monuments of Eleanor, queen of Edward I., the

designs of the school of Pisa. About this time, the very improvements introduced by Giovanni da Pisa, son of Nicolo, especially in the drapery, are decidedly apparent in those and other English works. Hence, although we find English names mentioned as masters of the works in several of our most splendid erections, and even in one instance as sculpturing the images of saints, it is doubtful whether they were not the ecclesiastics directly employed by the chapter to communicate their plans to the actual artificers. But it must also be observed, that the natural consequence of introducing foreign art would be to create native artists. There can be little doubt, therefore, that many of the really fine monuments of our Henrys and Edwards, during the fifteenth century, are the works of home-bred talent. During the sixteenth century, again, we do certainly know that two Italian sculptors, Cavallini, and especially the celebrated Torregiano, were in England, when the latter erected the monument in Henry VII.'s chapel, for which he received so large a sum as a thousand pounds. Henry VIII., again, had for his master of works an Italian sculptor, John of Padua, scholar of Michael Angelo. In 1615, we at length find a work erected by an Englishman, the monument of the 'good Thomas Sutton,' by Nicholas Stone; and, towards the conclusion of the same era, lived Francis Bird, a native of London, whose labours, however, only show the miserable state of art. Sculpture has never been practised as a separate branch in the early history of Scotland, who appears to have obtained her masters rather from France than Italy. In both countries, our first historians have been most culpably remiss in attention to the progress of native art. On the present occasion, to attempt a detailed account of the scattered notices they have left us, or, what might prove still more satisfactory, an examination of the

rich remains we possess, would be irrelevant, as we touch merely upon the general history of the arts, in which our own isolated labours, even at best, form only an episode.

Not till towards the conclusion of the last century can there properly be said to have existed a school of British sculpture. Cibber, Roubilac, Scheemakers, Carlini, Locatelli, Rysbrack — all the sculptors who flourished in England during the greater part of the eighteenth century, were foreigners. It is well that the fame of our good and our brave finds a memorial in the records of history, and in the breasts of their countrymen, more worthy of their virtues than these men have often erected, in the noblest, too, of our temples. Now, British worth can be commemorated by British art. Our native school of Sculpture may be considered as commencing with Banks, born in 1738, died in 1805; for Wilton, as an artist, was educated abroad. In power of modelling few have excelled Banks, whose name merits eulogium, and is mentioned by foreign writers as among the very few at Rome, who, previous to the appearance of Canova, presented in their works the dawnings of reviving art. Bacon, born in 1740, was in every respect an English artist, and we may almost say self-taught. In simplicity his works have great merit; they are often wanting in feeling. Bacon was not unacquainted with the literature of his art. Proctor and Deare died too early for the arts, after they had given evidence of the highest abilities. Deare has indeed left works, young as he was, not surpassed by any in modern art. We approach our more immediate contemporaries with respectful diffidence, and shall touch only upon the merits of those who are removed from the effects of praise or censure. Nollekins knew his *art*, but wanted *science*, dignity, and fancy. Flaxman belongs to posterity, and has more widely extended the influence of his genius —

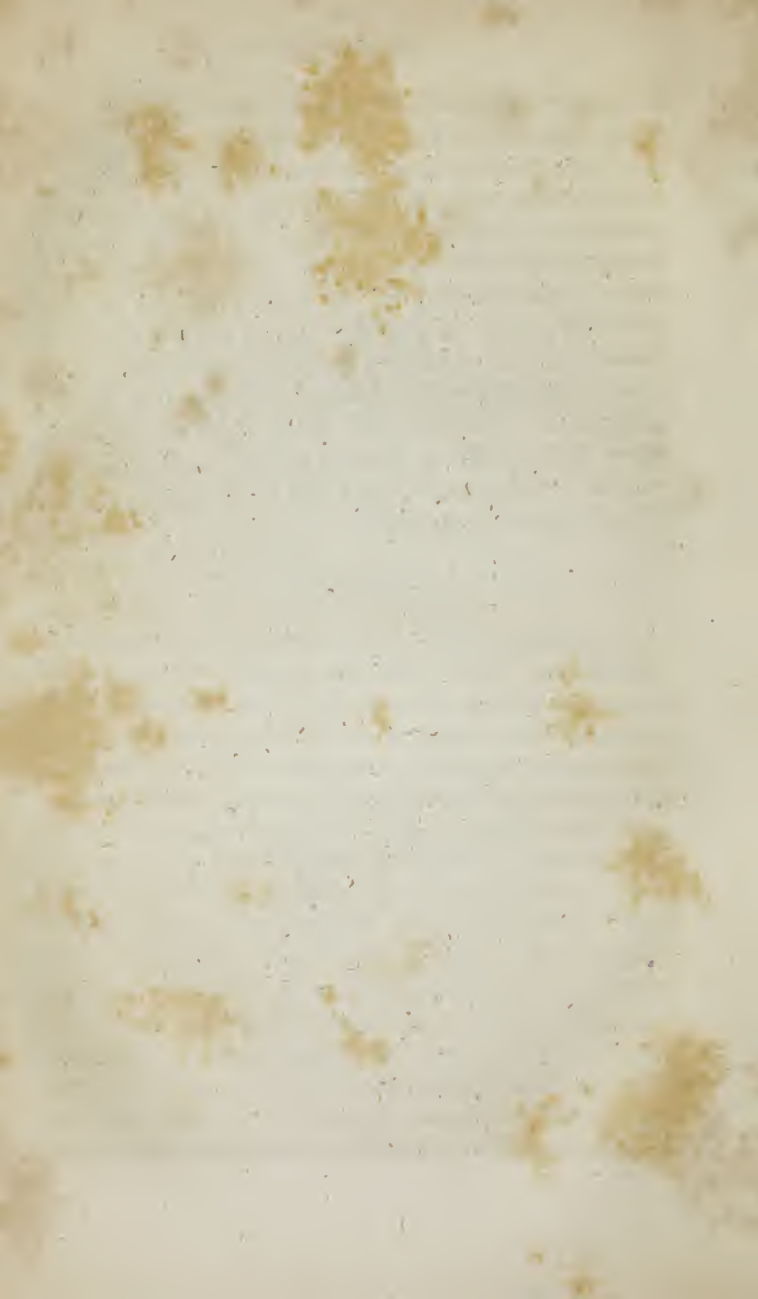


more intimately connected his labours with general improvement, than any other English sculptor. Towards the propitious revolution which rescued the arts from utter imbecility, in the latter end of last century, he largely contributed, by his learned, powerful, and simple style. From 1787 to 1794, he continued in Italy; and had his sojourn been longer, he would have divided not unequal honors with the great reformer of taste. This is known and acknowledged by the intelligent critics of that country, of whom one of the most judicious, Count Cicognara, thus writes:—‘To Flaxman our obligations are very great, since, as far as our acquaintance with his works extends, they served nobly to elevate from a certain monotonous lethargy, and to create afresh, that taste for the severe and golden style of antiquity, which he applied to his own inventions.’ From his youth, Flaxman was distinguished by the strength of his genius, by devotion to the study of the ancient models, and by fearless but judicious disregard of those conventional affectations by which art was disgraced. He was among the first, if not the earliest, to awaken the long dormant energies of sculpture, to unite anew art with nature. The simple and the grand of antiquity he made his own; nor, since the best ages of Greece, do we anywhere find, in the works mentioned in these pages, greater meaning, more deep feeling of truth, with less pomp of art, than in the sculpture of Flaxman. The wonderful designs from Homer, the statues of Mr Pitt and Sir Joshua Reynolds, the monuments of Montague, Howe, and Nelson, the group of Michael and Satan, will alone fully justify this character. If, in the works of this master, a defect may be pointed out, it is an excess of the severe and simple, which nearly approaches to harshness. Surpassing both Canova and Thorwaldsen in the loftiness of his conceptions, and perhaps in classic purity of taste,

in the graces of composition, and the facilities of modelling, he is inferior to the former. But in all that constitutes the epic of the art, Flaxman is not surpassed.

We must omit with regret, though not unadmired, the names of living English artists. To their honor be it remarked, that, at this moment, in rectitude and sobriety of precept, in the walk which has hitherto been followed, where nothing is yet to be unlearned, and which must infallibly conduct to higher perfection, no school in Europe can boast of happier auspices, of more vigorous practice, nor of sounder principles, than the British school of Sculpture. In Italy, the numerous — we may say universal — imitators of Canova, appear to be following, with exaggerated effect, the only failing towards which his style inclines — elaborate grace. In Germany, the art languishes for want of encouragement. Sculpture is more pre-eminently the nursling of freedom. The French sculptors are, at the present time, more distinguished for science than for feeling or invention. They want individuality of character in their works; the symmetry and proportions, the mechanical art of antiquity, their chisel has transferred, — but the sentiment, the essence which unites art with nature, which breathes into Grecian statuary the breath of life, has escaped. It is a singular fact, that from the school formed under the empire, while the most valued treasures of existing art were collected in the French capital, not a sculptor, hardly one artist of eminence, has issued. The cause is plain. These monuments were torn from their resting places by the hand of violence; they were viewed by a vain and mistaken people as the trophies of victory; but they were never venerated with that enthusiastic yet humble devotion, with which the disciple regards the sources of knowledge. During a shorter period, how different have been the effects

of our own unsullied and bloodless collection. Since the public exposition of the Phidian Marbles, in particular, every department of taste has been improved, and every artist has been ready to exclaim, with the late venerable president, that till he saw these works, he was ignorant how much of his art he had yet to learn. Let the British sculptor, then, continue in the same principles as have heretofore guided his practice; let him follow nature, and these the noblest remains of art in existence, and he must excel. Sculpture seems especially calculated to flourish amongst us. The grave and manly character of the art agrees with the tone of national genius, harmonizes with our free institutions, and may find in our history sources of the brightest inspiration.





# THE FINE ARTS.

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## PAINTING.

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### CHAPTER X.

IN the present undertaking, two methods of arrangement are obviously presented : either to treat the arts simultaneously ; or, considering each in succession, to commence with that one which seemed best adapted to illustrate the history and common principles of all. With this view we have, in the commencement, followed the fortunes of Sculpture at some length, because here we find an uninterrupted series of monuments ; here the elements of imitative art are discoverable in their purest and least compounded character ; and also because in Sculpture the labours, being enduring, of greater magnitude, and more generally employed for national purposes than those of Painting, seem more clearly to illustrate the connexion which will ever be found to subsist between the refinement of taste and the progress of moral and political intelligence, as affects nations, or the human race universally. This is the truly dignified object in the history of the fine arts. In this respect our inquiries have been

most satisfactorily resolved. We have found the state of sculpture an index of the moral and political condition of the people ; owing its best cultivation to national and popular causes. We have seen it languish or revive according to the energy and the freedom of national institutions. The epochs of painting were nearly or altogether the same, as were also those of architecture. The conclusions, then, are universal. Little, therefore, remains to be explained in painting, save its own peculiarities as an individual art.

Painting, which depends upon illusion for some of its most striking effects, and employs principles abstractly unreal, is, in the application of these principles, and in the full accomplishment of their effects, an art of greater difficulty than Sculpture. Hence, *a priori*, it might be inferred, that the former would more slowly attain to the perfection which it reached among the nations of the ancient world. But perhaps it would hardly have been predicted, that, in the age of Phidias, when sculpture had already been raised to an elevation yet unapproached, the sister art should still be little advanced. At the same time, there can be no doubt that the elements of both arts have in all countries sprung up together. Nature has sown the seed, but circumstances nourish the plants.

Among the ancient inhabitants of Asia, painting and writing appear to have been the same art, or rather, the former supplied the place of the latter. From the same source the art arose in Egypt, where are still to be found its oldest remains. In this branch the mental and political despotism already explained, bound down every aspiration. Whether we regard the art as picture writing, or in its more determinate and independent efforts at representation, we discover no change—no progressive improvement, and no superiority which has not evidently

arisen from a greater or less degree of care and personal skill in the performer. Egyptian painting seldom, if ever, attempts more than an outline of the object, as seen in profile, such as would be obtained by its shadow. To this rude but always well-proportioned draught, colors are applied, simply and without mixture or blending, or the slightest indication of light and shade. The process appears to have been, first, the preparation of the ground in white; next, the outline was firmly traced in black; and, lastly, the flat colors were applied. The Egyptian artists employed six pigments, mixed up with a gummy liquid, namely, white, black, red, blue, yellow, and green: the three first always earthy, the remaining vegetable, or at least frequently transparent. The specimens from which we derive these facts, are the painted shrouds and cases of the mummies, and the still more perfect examples on the walls of the tombs. It can furnish no evidence of extraordinary experience or practice, that these paintings still retain their hues clear and fresh. The circumstance merely shows the aridity of the climate, and that the coloring matters were prepared and applied pure and without admixture.

Over no part of ancient intellectual history hangs there so great uncertainty, respecting at least the means and progressive steps, as in the instance of Painting in Greece. We can judge here only from inference, while the facts upon which our conclusions must rest, are in some degree contradictory. No production of the Grecian pencil remains to us, as in sculpture, whence to form our own judgment apart from the opinions of ancient critics; while there is internal evidence, that the historical annals handed down to us, imperfect as these now are, have been compiled, not from authentic materials early collected, but from recollection of names to whom discoveries are by

the later historian casually attributed. The whole account of early painting is too regular, too systematic, the progressive advances follow each other in an order too artificial to represent faithfully the alternate failure and success, the devious course, the rapid and almost inexplicable advance of genius. The young eagle tempts not the liquid way in steady flight, commensurate only with his strength — he flutters and falls — wavers in broken and ungraceful curves, before he can launch into full career, or circle slowly and majestically in his pride of place.

We do not doubt, then, that the names of the earliest painters handed down to us in the Greek and Roman writers, are correct; but the system of gradual and regular advance which they have connected with these names, seems inconsistent with the nature of human things. In this case, the only safe method that can be adopted, consistently with the intention of giving every useful information, is to select a few leading and well ascertained dates, between which it is proved that certain discoveries did take place; the interval will thus be sufficiently filled up without entering into minute discussion. Anticipating this arrangement, we have been full in our account of the early schools of sculpture, whence the deficiency here may be supplied; for in both arts, the locality is always, and the masters frequently, the same.

The first painting on record is the battle of Magnete, by Bularchus, and purchased by Candaules, king of Lydia, for its weight in gold, or as some say, a quantity of gold coins equal to the extent of its surface. This establishes the first era, 718 B. C. During five centuries, however, the art had previously flourished in the cities and islands, and especially at Corinth, whose situation, commanding the two seas that wash the shores, and connecting by land



the grand divisions, of Greece, early rendered that city, with the commercial states already noticed, the seat of wealth and refinement. Practised by numerous masters, — as Eucherus, Hygenon, Dymas, Charamides, Philocles, Cleanthes, Cleophantes, — painting, in this interval, is reported to have passed through various gradations; as, simple skiagraphy, or shadow painting; the monographic style, consisting of a simple outline; monochromatic compositions, in which one color only was employed; and polychromatic, where a variety of hue, but without shading, was used. During the same time, there appear accounts of minor improvements, with their authors assigned, all of which we reject, as already stated. In what manner the work of Bularchus was executed, does not appear; but there is every reason to believe that it was merely a monogram, and, from the contemporaneous state of sculpture, very highly finished, in a style hard, dry, and ineffective. The price paid is by no means the criterion of absolute excellence; — the work might be fully prized as the master-piece of its own remote age, while the laborious minuteness of its details might render the sum not more than a compensation for the time bestowed.

To select a second era sufficiently marked by addition or revolution of principle, is difficult. To the age of Phidias, the art continued certainly to improve, but very slowly, being left far in the rear by Sculpture. The genius of this consummate master, who indeed had originally commenced his career as a painter, extended to all the arts; and, under such an instructor, his brother Pænus, very highly distinguished himself, though vanquished in a contest for the public prize, then instituted at Delphos and Corinth. From the middle of the fifth century, then, a decided movement commences in the history of painting, — a preparation for something still greater. The

influence extended among the able contemporaries of the great sculptor. Polygnotus of Thasos then first succeeded, to borrow a phrase, 'in the expression of undescribed being,' and whose pictures Pliny admired six hundred years afterwards. Improvement was carried forward for half a century by Mycon, famous in horses; Pauson, his rival; Dionysius of Colophon, praised by Ælian for minute accuracy; Aglaophon, bold and energetic; Colotes, sculptor and painter; Evenor, father of Parrhasius; and finally, greatest of all, Apollodorus the Athenian, who invented or perfected the knowledge of light and shade. With this artist, the precursor and contemporary of Zeuxis, and whose discovery may be placed about the commencement of the fourth century B. C., may be terminated the second era. The propriety of this division will more obviously appear, when it is considered that to this period, not only was the art deficient in the most powerful of its means, the magic of *chiar' oscura*, but also in its instruments. The ancient paintings, as late as the age of Phidias, were executed with the *cestrum*, a species of pliant *stylus*, similar to that used in writing. This is the diagraphic, or linear method, and seems to have resembled our chalk and crayon, or perhaps more closely our pen and reed drawing. The process, however, can be explained only by conjecture. The tablet, primed in white, was laid over with a varnish of resin mixed with wax, and usually incorporated with a dark-reddish coloring matter. Upon this the subject was traced, and the lights worked in with the *cestrum* of various fineness. At what precise period this imperfect instrument was superseded by the pencil, or if the effects of the two were combined, is unknown. But the invention must have been made after the death of Polygnotus, and prior to the ninetythird Olympiad, a period of twenty or thirty years, when Apollodorus is

known to have handled the pencil with great effect. It is not unlikely, therefore, that this artist either was the inventor or the improver of this tool, whose mastery so decidedly ministered to his reputation.

The third period commences with Zeuxis, marking an era distinct at once in principle and in excellence. Preceding masters had crowded their tablets with numerous figures. He introduced simplicity of composition, and relied upon the perfection frequently of a single figure to concentrate interest. He was equally simple in his coloring, never using more than four, often only two pigments. Parrhasius equalled the former in expression, and seems to have surpassed him in coloring. Euphranor was equally celebrated in painting as in statuary. Both were surpassed by Timanthes, who, in veiling the head of a father compelled to attend the sacrifice of his daughter, appealed to the heart not in vain, when the powers of genius had failed. Eupompus, by the splendour of his style, gave rise to a new distinction of schools into the Athenian and Sicyonian, in addition to the Asiatic, the Rhodian, and the Corinthian. Theon of Samos obtained high praise for the eager haste of his young warrior to join the fight. Aristides of Thebes, in his picture of the wounded mother, solicitous, in the pangs of death, lest her child should suck blood, appears to have reached the utmost range of expression in art. And lastly, Pamphilus the Macedonian, eminent for the natural feeling and truth of his style, was the master of Apelles. This era, embracing about the first half of the fourth century, coincides with the commencement of the Phidian age in painting. Whatever might have been the merits of preceding masters, Zeuxis was certainly the first from whose works we derive explicit statements of the ideal in Grecian painting. This ideal, as in their sculpture, was immediately derived

from reality ; it was no farther the creation of fancy, than as taste and imagination were employed in selecting and combining what was good in particular, towards an approach to the best, in general nature. ‘Behold,’ said Eupompus to Lysippus, when consulted by the young sculptor on the subject of imitation, pointing to the passing multitude, ‘Behold my models: from nature, not from art, must he study, who aspires to the true excellence of art.’ Zeuxis, then, first discovered or practised the grand principle in the heroic style of painting, — to render each figure the perfect representative of the class to which it belongs. There is reason to believe, also, that he taught the true method of grouping ; at least, from the manner of description adopted by Pausanias, it would evidently seem that in all pictures anterior to this age, the figures were ranged in lines, without any principal group on which the interest of the event was concentrated. Even so late as the works of Panæus, the brother of Phidias, the different distances were represented by the very inartificial and ungracious means of placing the figures in rows one above the other. In all his improvements, Zeuxis was more than followed by his able contemporaries. It is a singular and an amusing fact, that at no time do we find more real talent in art, combined with so much ridiculous coxcomby in the personal character of artists.

The fourth and last epoch of painting in Greece commences with Apelles, about the conclusion of the fourth century B. C. This age witnessed both the glory and the fall of ancient art. Apelles united, in his own style, the scattered excellences which had separately adorned the performances of his predecessors. It was this power and equability of combination, arranged and animated by an elegance and refinement of taste peculiarly his own, which constituted the just eminence of this master. From the



descriptions of ancient writers, the character of his style must have closely resembled that of Raphael, while their choice of subjects appears to have been nearly similar. The Venus of Apelles, long afterwards purchased by Augustus for one hundred talents, or £20,000 sterling, was esteemed the most faultless creation of the Grecian pencil, the most perfect example of that simple yet unapproachable grace of conception, of symmetry of form, and exquisite finish, in which may be summed up the distinctive beauties of his genius. He alone appears to have practised portrait painting in the full majesty of that art; this, indeed, does not appear to have been a branch the most cultivated among the Greeks, who preferred busts. Hence, while Pausanias enumerates eighty-eight masterpieces of history, he mentions only half the number of portraits, which he had seen in his travels through Greece, during the second century.

The contemporaries of Apelles were Protogenes, an excellent artist, whose merits his generous rival first pointed out. He was blamed for finishing too highly; yet, to obtain possession of one of his pictures, was the chief cause of the siege of Rhodes. Nicias, who is reported to have touched up the statues of Praxiteles — in what manner is not known, nor was Canova successful in his researches on this subject. Somewhat later lived Nichomachus, Pausius, Ætion, the Albano of antiquity, and others, with whom the art began to lapse. The causes and progress of this decline have already been traced in the history of sculpture. The remarks there are applicable to both arts, but peculiar circumstances rendered the progress of decay more rapid in painting. Even in the later contemporaries of the great ornament of the art, we discover a falling off from the great style, to one exactly resembling that of the modern Dutch school. Although the best pictures,

from their greater rarity, were more highly valued in pecuniary estimation than statues, yet the art was never so completely national as Sculpture. The ambition was not cherished, nor the talents of painters directed, by the nationality of their performances; the general taste was not fixed by public and venerated monuments, consequently the wholesome restraints of public opinion operated but slightly, and were speedily withdrawn. Be it also remembered, that the standard here was formed after the severe purity of ancient taste, and morals had suffered sad relaxation. Hence painting was sooner abandoned to the caprice of private patronage and judgment; but the whole framework of her institutions, moral and political, was to be dissolved before sculpture, — which honored the forms of her religion; whose labours were publicly dedicated to the renown of her good, her learned, and her brave, — could cease to be regarded with national sympathy in Greece. Pausanias mentions the names of one hundred and sixtynine sculptors, and only fifteen painters; while, after three centuries of spoliation, he found in Greece three thousand statues, not one of them a copy, while he describes only one hundred and thirtyone paintings. The empire, then, of ancient painting, appears to have been of brief continuance, for, beyond the age now under review, no memorials of its greatness remain. The Romans prized this, as they have been shown to value every accomplishment in the fine arts, as ministering to luxury, and as a worthy employment for their slaves. In the early portion of their iron reign, Etruscan captives decorated their houses — subsequently itinerant Greeks; and though we find a few names of Roman painters, we never find it carried among them beyond mere embellishment. The moral dignity of the art never revived.

One difficulty regarding the history of ancient painting still remains to be stated — satisfactorily cleared it never can be — namely, the perfection to which the art actually attained. It has been said, and the remark is just, that there exists a wide disparity between the means and instruments of the art, as described by writers of antiquity, and the excellence of the effects produced, as these have reached us through the same channel. We have, it is replied, the criticisms of the same writers upon other subjects of taste, with the originals likewise in our hands, and finding here their opinions correct — not only so, but exquisitely correct — we are constrained to admit, that in painting their judgment was equally refined as in poetry, oratory, sculpture, or architecture. This reasoning may prove relative, but not absolute excellence; for taste being necessarily formed upon the very models on which it passes sentence, cannot be admitted as evidence beyond its experience. Our own conviction is, that, unless in this view of merely relative beauty, the praises bestowed by the Greek and Roman writers upon their paintings are overcharged; and that these were much inferior to their sculptures. This opinion is founded not upon any alleged inferiority of means, for, besides the difficulty of exactly comprehending certain passages on this subject, we do find, that the ancient artists were armed with all the powers of fresco-painting, in which the grandest conceptions of modern talent are embodied. But these very descriptions, in many of which are accounts of very complicated expression, show that the writers, and especially Pliny, the most circumstantial, either did not truly feel the nature and object of beauty in painting; or they evince, that if such effects were attempted, the art was devoid of that simplicity and natural expression which constitute the primeval source, the all-pervading principle, of beauty and

of grandeur, of truth and excellence, in antique sculpture. But again, if, from the few and very imperfect remains of ancient painting, any conclusion be allowed in reference to its higher state, we discover in these all the principles, especially those of form, common to sculpture, always well, often admirably understood, while those peculiar to painting are inartificially expressed, without firmness or decision.

These remains consist, first, of the delineations upon vases, improperly called Etruscan, where the pictorial representations are monochromatic shadows and outline, or monograms, executed with the *cestrum*, or style, in black, upon a red or yellow ground, or sometimes the order of the colors is reversed. Even these support the views just stated; for, vigorous as are the lines, the representation, on the whole, is inferior to the abstract perception of the beautiful in form, as exhibited in the vases themselves. The second division of remains are the frescos, or stucco paintings of Herculaneum, Pompeii, Stabia near Naples, and those in the baths of Titus at Rome. The former were doubtless executed by itinerant Greek painters, who are known to have been very numerous under the empire. The latter were most probably the performance of the best artists that could be procured; yet we do not discover an intrinsic difference of style which can bear against our general conclusion, or rather the similarity proves the fact, while in Herculaneum every sculptured ornament is infinitely more elegant than the paintings found in the same spot. To these might be added some very imperfect sepulchral remains, found near Tarquinia, which merely prove that the ancient Etruscans were far from ignorant of painting. In the pictures at Naples and Rome, is greater variety of coloring than, from some passages in their writings, has been allowed to



the ancients. And, indeed, unless Pliny be supposed to point out a distinction in this respect between the practice of the earlier and later painters, he contradicts himself; for in all, he enumerates no less than five different whites, three yellows, nine reds or purples, two blues, one of which is indigo, two greens, and one black, which also appears to be a generic expression, including bitumen, charcoal, ivory, or lamp-black, mentioned with probably others.

Occasional allusion has been made to the mechanical modes of operation employed in ancient painting. On comparing the different passages allusive to these, two things certainly appear: that a permanency was given to its productions unknown even in modern art; and that oil-painting, properly so termed, formed no part of its practice. Laying aside, then, all conflicting opinions, we are disposed to infer that there were three principal methods; first, Distemper employed on stuccoed walls, and for pictures not moveable; second, Glazing, when the picture, after being furnished in water-colours, crayons, or distemper, was covered with a coat of hard and transparent varnish, of which several kinds are described; and thirdly, Encaustic, when the coloring matters actually incorporated with wax, or preparations of wax, were thus applied in a liquid state, and when finished, allowed to dry, and most likely afterwards varnished also. In these two latter methods were executed the most excellent pictures of the great masters, and which were portable. The last has given rise to much needless discussion, as if resembling enamel, the colors being burnt in. We apprehend, however, the Greek and Latin verb here used, merely denotes that the tints were laid on hot, which, from their nature, must have been absolutely necessary, while it is evident, from scattered hints, that the material painted upon was destructible by fire.

## CHAPTER XI.

FALLEN as was every liberal pursuit during those ages, since emphatically called dark, painting was yet never unpractised in Europe. In the ecclesiastical records of that period, evidence is found that, in Italy, churches were in every century decorated with paintings and mosaics by native or Greek artists. A kind of competition, indeed, appears to have been carried on between the successive pontiffs, imitated by their inferior suffragans, who should thus load some favorite cathedral with the greatest quantity of barbarous finery. These gentlemen, as even the Abbate Tiraboschi has ventured to disclose, being rarely ornamental to the church in their own proper persons, endeavored to make up the deficiency in the best way possible by proxy. From monuments still remaining in Germany, it is evident, that neither was some degree of skill wanting in that quarter. In France, as in our country, similar research would probably be rewarded with the same discovery. Though darkened, the human spirit was still at work; and when at length its energies were restored to comparative activity by the slow operation of causes, imperceptible in themselves, mighty in their results, the arts, as already seen, shone forth among the morning stars in the dawn of freedom. This light first arose upon Italy; and, from the circumstances of her situation, Florence soonest established a school of painting. Cimabue, her citizen, early in the thirteenth century, caught the inspiration from certain Greek painters, employed by order of the magistracy. Equalling his masters, he was himself surpassed by Giotto, once a shepherd boy; in turn excelled by Memmi, Orgagna, Ucello, Masolino, to the middle of the fifteenth century, when all

former names were forgotten in the merits of Massaccio. Dying at the age of twentyfour, he gave to painting truth, expression, light, and shade ; thus creating the first era in its history. The chapel which still contains his frescoes, the early school of Da Vinci and Buonarotti — the scene, too, of the latter's misfortune, will long be visited with interest by the pilgrims of art. About the same time, the invention of oil painting, ascribed to Van Eyck of Bruges ; and, not long after, the illusion of aerial perspective added by Ghirlandajo, gave to modern art all the means of perfection. These did not remain unimproved in the hands of such men as Verrocchio, first excelling in perspective, Lippi, Signorelli, in whose works evidence of selection is apparent, and many others, who, in different cities in Italy, were now laying the foundation of schools, soon to become as distinct in manner as the masters of one and the same art can well be conceived.

But though much had been accomplished before the close of the fifteenth century, as respects the higher qualities of imitative art, painting was still in infancy. Leonardo da Vinci, born in 1452, reared it to high maturity. The genius of this extraordinary man seemed as a mirror, receiving and reflecting, in added brightness, every ray of intellectual light which had yet beamed upon the age. Philosopher, poet, artist, he anticipated the march of three centuries ; proving, in his own instance, what the unshackled energies of man would then accomplish. Yet — and that, too, by a living historian of most deserved reputation — has Leonardo been represented as a dabbler in various knowledge, a proficient in none — a laborious idler, wasting time and talent in useless multiplicity of pursuit. This apparently has been done to exalt his great contemporary and successor ; but history ought not to be written as a picture is painted, touching in under-tones

what are deemed secondaries, that the light may be more conspicuously directed to a principal figure. At the shrine of art, the devotion of Da Vinci was neither devoid of fervor nor unfruitful; albeit he courted, and not unsuccessfully, the favors of science, then new and dear to the aspiring mind. His true rank is not only among the fathers, but the masters of the art; he is one who not merely preceded, but excelled. His cartoon of horsemen in the battle of Pisa formed a favorite study of the greatest masters; and, in competition, Michael Angelo produced another of soldiers arming in haste, after bathing; which even his admirers say he scarcely ever afterwards equalled. Yet was Leonardo not vanquished. The Last Supper, painted in fresco, at Milan, exhibited a dignity and propriety of expression, a correctness of drawing, then unequalled; and, if seen as originally finished, probably still unsurpassed. The story of the head of the principal personage having been left incomplete is a vulgar error, as might be easily proved by reference to the early literature of Italian art. The well-known portrait of Mona Lisa, in purity of drawing, sweetness of simple and natural expression, has an equal only in the works of Raphael. But the influence of this master extended much more widely than the sphere of individual examples: he first united the science of anatomy with that of painting, and both with nature; and thus may truly be said to have prepared the art for the coming greatness.

To the majesty of Michael Angelo's genius the reader has already done homage. If in sculpture the grandeur of his conceptions was admired, in painting this greatness is still more wonderful, but unfortunately, not less singular and remote from nature. Yet, than the painting of Buonarotti there is perhaps no instance of intellectual



power more truly grand in the entire history of mind. Previous to leaving his native Florence, where he was born, of a noble family, in 1474; and whence he fled, when his country became false to herself and to freedom, architecture and sculpture had formed his principal studies. Design he had pursued little farther than as indispensably connected with these: of painting, as a separate science, he was of course comparatively ignorant. In this state of knowledge, he received orders to complete the paintings in the Sextine Chapel, upon which several of the artists, already mentioned, had before been engaged. Yet, at this time, Michael Angelo was unacquainted with the mechanical processes of fresco. To produce the designs was to him a labour of ease; and these he endeavored to have executed by artists brought from Florence; but on trial, dismissed them in all save utter hopelessness. Rising in the strength and perseverance of indomitable genius, he resolved to begin art anew, and to depend henceforth solely on his own resources. Shutting himself up in the fated chapel, preparing the materials with his own hands, after many trials and failures, — after beholding the first piece finished to his satisfaction, moulder and mildew almost before his admiring eye — he at length triumphed, achieving in the course of years the most adventurous undertaking in modern art, under circumstances, too, that while they encourage all, leave to none who aspires to the moral dignity of talent even the shadow of an apology for irresolution or indolence.

The walls and ceiling of the Sextine Chapel, with the picture of the Last Judgment, executed thirty years afterwards, form the principal, almost the sole, works of Michael Angelo in painting. The latter is the greatest work of modern art, being fifty feet high by forty wide, and containing upwards of 300 figures, many of which are larger than life. Here the human form appears under every

variety of position, and agitated by every gradation of feeling; and over the whole is diffused a living ease—a science—a magic power—a fascination, which constrains us to gaze with wonder, astonishment, admiration, but not with interest or sympathy. Similar are our feelings in every other example; nor can this be exactly charged as a defect. Michael Angelo formed a system for himself—he stands alone in his art—an ideal abstraction of mind was the object of his imitation, to which all of living nature, elevated into gigantic forms and energetic modes, was to be moulded in subserviency. His art was creative, not imitative—standing forth, in its own independence of aim.

Hence, there are two relations in which the works in painting of Michael Angelo are to be examined, and according to which his merits will be very differently estimated. Viewed in themselves, the frescos of the Vatican present astonishing evidences of human power. Every thought is grandeur and strength; and the rapid, fervent execution arms the pencil with an omnipotence of art equal to all the modifications of form. Here the whole is perfect, inimitable; within this his own walk, Buonarotti has no compeer,—‘second to none, with nothing like to him.’ But when the same works are considered in reference to the general principles of imitation, and as deriving value according as they reflect the archetypes of elevated nature, those very qualities which formerly constrained our approbation, become startling blemishes. The ideal is found to consist solely in the imaginative; sublimity is sought too exclusively in the vehement to be always dignified. All is action,—all participates of an unquiet and too aspiring character of composition: every form, every muscle, every attitude, exhibits the very gladiatorship of art,—for each is displayed, exerted, involved, to

the utmost. Even repose is anything save rest. Yet, in difficulty apparently insurmountable, constraint is not perceived; the execution, wonderfully facile, though too prominent in general effect, gives to each giant limb of the awful and gloomy shapes, the very effect of life and movement. But to this display of capabilities — to the exhibition of science, and the sporting with difficulty, truth, simplicity, feeling, and real beauty, have been sacrificed. In this nothing seems peculiar to painting as distinguished from sculpture; nor, indeed, is there any discrimination: color, tone, light, shadow — all is systematic and ideal, but all mighty and overpowering in the whole. Again, when the influence of such a style upon the progress of improvement is considered, it appears that such influence could be favorable neither to future improvement nor to stationary excellence. The greatness of Michael Angelo, then, is his own — not the grandeur of art. Both sculpture and painting he made subservient to the loftiest aims, and the most splendid fame any artist ever did, perhaps can, pursue or attain; yet each was but a slave, ministering to a glory in which neither intrinsically participated.

Contemporary with the ‘mighty Florentine,’ but most unlike in all the characteristics of genius, save the sublimity of the final result, was Raphael, the founder and master of the Roman school. Born at Urbino, 1483, he arrived in Rome upon the invitation of his relation, Bramante, the architect, about 1508, nearly at the same time with his great rival. Dying on his thirtyseventh birthday, he has, in a short life, bequeathed to posterity works almost equally numerous, and certainly displaying more of the profound excellences and beautiful sentiment of art, than those of any name since the revival of painting. Of these inestimable productions there remain to us easel pic-

tures in oil, cartoons, and frescos, exhibiting, also, three different manners. The first dry, little, and tedious, but not without truth — often great beauty of finishing. This was derived from his instructor, Pietro Perugino; and though observable as a general characteristic only in his early easel pictures, and some frescos at Sienna, may yet occasionally be detected in the careful pencilling even of his frescos, and in the making-out of his accompaniments. The pictures which display this style are those painted after he left his master in 1499, and before his return to Urbino about 1504. The finest of these was executed in his seventeenth year, representing a Holy Family, — the Virgin raising a veil from the Infant, who sleeps. Except in the works of Da Vinci, so much sweetness of expression and beauty of design had not yet appeared in the art, as is found even in this youthful production. The second manner is an intermediate step — an attempt to escape from a minuteness which he soon discovered to be unsuitable both to his own fervor and the dignity of art. The change is perceptible immediately after he had studied the works of the Florentine masters, whose improvements, and the vigor of their enlarged style, he would at sight appreciate as movements evidently in advance, but with which he had hitherto remained unacquainted. As a separate manner, it can scarcely be said to exist; for at most it was but a new instrument in the possession of a mind which has made everything its own. All that is apparent amounts merely to a progressive melioration, extending through three or four years, of which space he resided nearly two in Florence, studying the performances of art in that city, but receiving no personal instructions, excepting a reciprocal interchange of knowledge with Fra Bartolomeo. The most celebrated pictures produced by him during this interval are the Virgin, In-



fant, and St John, in the ducal gallery, and the entombing of Christ, now at Rome. These, more strikingly when viewed in comparison with the style of contemporary works, exhibit beauties of so opposite a character to the compositions of Michael Angelo, that it is impossible to perceive any grounds on which the obligations said to be owing by their author to the latter can be rested. Buonarotti, in fact, could not, or at least never did, paint in a taste of such simplicity as these exhibit. The third manner is solely and exclusively individual, neither derived nor — we grieve to say — inherited; full, harmonious, sweet, and flowing — yet bold, learned, and sustained,—composed of such an union of natural grace and antique correctness, as meet only in the creations of Raphael's pencil. To this style his most important works belong, having been formed after his arrival in Rome, and when he had there become deeply impressed with the sublimities of ancient art. In the space of only twelve years — for he united exquisite finish with wonderful expedition — he completed the frescos of the Vatican and the Farnesina, besides others, amounting to many hundred figures — designed the Cartoons — cultivating, at the same time, architecture (of which he was a master), poetry, and sculpture. During the same laborious period were produced those exquisite paintings in oil, which have chiefly contributed to spread his fame beyond Italy. Of these the best, the most wonderful, though in slight respects not the most perfect, is the Transfiguration — the last bequeathment of his genius to the arts and to posterity, for he died within a few days after it was completed.

As Raphael in these works, no painter has ever done so much for the real excellence of the art, nor, in the principles upon which they are conducted, has placed improvement on precepts so pure, so unerring. All that

imagination could lend to a strictly imitative art he has added, yet has infused into its creations the warmest sensibilities of life ; to nature he has given all that grace and fancy can bestow, consistent with the sweetest of all charms—leaving her nature still. On this account is Raphael, of all great names in art, the safest to adopt as the guide of taste and practice. For were the most decided admirer of system merely to copy, he would quickly find himself constrained to become the disciple of reality. True, we discover no mixed modes of nature, such as impede her energies and cloud her beauties in ordinary life ; yet the tranquil loveliness—the sinless beauty—the noble feeling of the representation—has nothing of the cold and merely imaginative. This, indeed, constitutes the great charm of Raphael's grace, that neither in form nor expression is it abstract ; its power of moving is acquired directly from human sympathy. In gazing upon his dramatic scenes and breathing figures, who has not experienced this truth in a gradual melting of the heart, in unison with every pure and holy remembrance that connects man with the species ? See the Madona—how mildly, simply beautiful ! In that bosom not one rude passion has a resting place ; yet feels not each spectator now called-up dear though distant recollections of a parent's—a mother's tenderness, with all the reverential charities of life's spring ? Behold the Magdalen—how changed the sensibilities ! still how respectable ! One overmastering, absorbing affection. No meretricious display—every movement is that of passion, but of sentiment too. Or view that youth so intent upon instruction ; he hangs upon the very words of his aged guide. How powerfully do we conceive the mature resolves that irradiate the ingenuous countenance ! Or turn your attention to the child who is playing in the lap of the mother—

how innocently happy! how unconsciously beautiful! Yet look again; — even here is passion, sentiment, futurity. The imagination involuntarily shapes out the fortunes of that disposition so legibly expressed in the speaking countenance. But in the deep meaning of the mild full eye, in the holy expression which beams in every lineament, in the spotless form, has not genius made the nearest approaches to our unbreathed conceptions of an infant Saviour! Regard that prophet — how glorious, yet how good, he seems! No spirit insensible to human woe, un pitying of human frailty, lives there. The errors and backslidings of his race have given a fixed though placid sorrow to the eye, but the closing sunshine of his own pure life hath settled on the majestic brow.

Such are all the works of Raphael, full to overflowing of human sentiment and of interest. In their very highest ideal, they are but the primeval dignity and sacredness of our nature. How then can these facts be reconciled with the opinion so boldly and so long asserted, that they do not strike at first sight — that the heart as well as the judgment must be gradually prepared to relish their beauties? We shall not attempt to reconcile — we deny the conclusion. Where these works have not been from the first felt, and admired, and loved in their truth and in their simplicity, they have been viewed through the mists of false theory, or compared with erroneous standards of excellence. We discard all consideration of the theories of the French professional critics on this subject; but it has often been matter of great surprise to find Sir Joshua Reynolds maintaining the same system. ‘I remember very well,’ says the English artist, ‘my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican; but on confessing my feelings to a brother student, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of

Raphael had the same effect upon him — or rather, that they did not produce the effect which he expected. This was a great relief to my mind ; and on inquiring further of other students, I found that those persons only, who, from natural imbecility, appeared incapable of ever relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them. I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted ; I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. I viewed them again and again ; I even affected to admire them more than I really did. In a short time a new taste and a new perception began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of the art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world. But let it always be remembered that the excellence of his style is not on the surface, but lies deep, and at first view is seen but mistily. It is the florid style which strikes at once, and captivates the eye for a time, without ever satisfying the judgment.' We admire this candor, and can at once admit the justness of these remarks in general, when applied to the works of Michael Angelo, on whose principles it is well known that Sir Joshua formed his theory of ideal beauty. But in reference to Raphael, conclusions the very opposite would be nearer the truth. Drawn immediately from nature, as are all his ideas, they interest the heart at once ; and as we study the exquisite mechanism, the perfection of the details, the propriety of the composition, the judgment confirms yet more the impressions which the heart first entertained.

These observations lead to, while they are confirmed by, another view, which yet remains to be taken of the genius of Raphael. It is only in the individuality and



profoundness of expression, that he reaches the sublimities of art. In the abstract conception of form he is inferior; hence, in the representations of mythological existences, he becomes feeble in proportion as he generalizes. It is this that discriminates between the Roman and the Florentine. The former is the painter of men as they live, and feel, and act; the latter delineates man in the abstract. The one embodies sentiment — feeling — passion; the other portrays the capacities, energies, and idealities of form. Raphael excels in resemblance; he walks the earth, but with dignity, and is seen to most advantage in relations of human fellowship. Michael Angelo can be viewed only in his own world; with ours he holds no farther communion than is necessary to obtain a common medium of intelligence. In the grand, the venerable, the touching realities of life, the first is unrivalled; his fair, and seeming true, creations cause us to reverence humanity and ourselves. Over the awful and the sublime of fiction, the second extends a terrible sway; he calls spirits from their shadowy realms, and they come at his bidding, in giant shapes, to frown upon the impotency of man.

To contend here for superiority is futile — each has his own independent sphere. The style of Raphael has justly been characterised as the dramatic, that of Michael Angelo as the epic, of painting. The distinction is accurate, in as far as the former has made to pass before us character in conflict with passion — in all its individualities of mode; while the latter represented and generalized both character and passion. The first leads us from natural beauty to divine — the second elevates us at once into regions which his own lofty imaginations have peopled. Hence, than Michael Angelo's prophets, and other beings that just hover on the confines of human and spiritual existence, the whole range of art and poetry never has, and

never will, produce more magnificent and adventurous creations. This is his true power — here he reigns alone, investing art with a mightiness unapproachable by any other pencil. But when the interest is to be derived from known forms, and natural combinations, he fails almost utterly; never can his line want grandeur — but grandeur so frequently substituted for feeling, and when the subject cannot sustain it, presents only gorgeous caricature. Human affection mingles in every touch of Raphael, and he carries our nature to its highest moral, if not physical, elevation. Hence, his supernatural forms may want abstract majesty and overawing expression; but they display a community in this world's feelings, without its weaknesses or imperfections, by which the heart is perhaps even more subdued.

If this be a true estimate of the powers of these great men, and we have drawn our inferences from impressions often felt, and long studied, no comparison can be more unjust, nor less apt, than the one so frequently repeated, that Michael Angelo is the Homer, Raphael the Virgil, of modern painting. The Florentine may justly take his place by the side of the Greek. Not so the Roman and the Mantuan. The copyist of Homer, nay, frequently his translator, whose nature is taken at second-hand — whose characters, in the mass, have about as much individuality as the soldiers of a platoon, and little more intellectual discrimination than brave, braver, and bravest, must occupy a lower seat at the banquet of genius than the original, the ever varied, and graphic artist. The great error in estimating the merits of these masters appears to have arisen from not considering them separately, and as independent minds. Michael Angelo, indeed, created, while Raphael may be said to have composed; but he discovered and collected — he did not derive his materials. Michael

Angelo found the art poor in means, undignified and powerless in composition; he assumed it in feebleness, and bore it at once to maturity of strength. Of these improvements Raphael profited by novel application; but the advantage was nothing more than necessarily occurs in the spread of intelligence. Massaccio had, in like manner, prepared the previous change; Da Vinci first, then Buonarroti, took it up. The pupil of Perugino made availment of this new path to a commanding height, whence the whole prospect of the empire of art might be surveyed, but over this his genius soared in guideless, independent flight. Than the invention, and at such a time, of Michael Angelo's mighty system, there is to be found no greater evidence of talent, nor of greater talent; but from the mind that could conceive that system, scarcely an exertion was demanded to maintain supremacy therein, guarded as were its claims against all rivalry by the very novelty and peculiarity of the style, where each adopter would be degraded into an imitator. On the other hand, if the perfection of Raphael's manner appear to be more in the ordinary course of genius, it is to be remembered, that its very perfectness depends upon those qualities of mind which most rarely assemble in the constitution of inventive genius — exquisite taste, sound judgment, patient study, and profound knowledge of the human heart. Be it also recollected, that to support the mastery here, in a style founded on no peculiar habitudes of intellect, but embracing the general and intrinsic principles of art, where all good artists would consequently be rivals, without incurring the imputation of copying, required unabating effort, diligence, and originality, — more liberal and varied excellence, than in the preceding system. Here we at length discover the real and abiding superiority of Raphael. It is not that he pre-eminently surpasses in one of the faculties of genius,

but he has embodied in his labours more of the requisites of perfection than any other of the modern masters. In grandeur of invention and form, he is inferior to Michael Angelo. Titian surpasses him in coloring, Corregio in gradation of tone. This superiority, however, becomes visible only where each of the qualities becomes the ruling sentiment of the work. For when we view in itself a composition of Raphael, where the style of design so exquisitely accords with the forms, the coloring corresponding with each, the *chiar' oscuro* just adequate to the degree of perception meditated; the whole harmonized by innate and unerring propriety, animated with his own peculiar grace and sentiment, while each separate quality becomes yet more perfect in the combination,—the pencil seems justly to have attained its unrivalled utmost.

With their respective founders, the schools of Rome and Florence may be said to have terminated; at least the mantle of their teacher rested with very unequal inspiration upon the disciples of both. The death of Raphael, in 1520, proved an irremediable loss to the arts, the extent of which never can indeed be known. His pure and natural style, had it been more firmly engrafted by longer life, would probably have delayed, perhaps prevented, the sudden extravagance and mannerism which overspread the united schools of Tuscany and Rome, at the head of which Michael Angelo survived upwards of forty years.

Among the various pursuits of taste, painting alone exhibits this singular fortune, that the noblest and most intellectual of its principles, as also those which speak most directly to sense, and are merely alluring, were invented at the same time, but in different places, and separately practised. It is worthy of remark, also, that in each respect the first inventors remained the most accomplished professors of their own discoveries. While in Rome and



Florence, design and expression were receiving their perfection, forming the almost exclusive subjects of study, in Venice, the seductions of coloring, in Lombardy, the illusions of light and shadow, were adding unknown pomp and magic to the art.

The school of Venice, though one of the earliest in Europe to cherish reviving arts, has added little of intellectual or noble to their progressive culture. Here they have never flourished in the genial soil of popular institutions. A haughty and jealous, yet luxurious and unpatriotic aristocracy, converted the arts into instruments of private gratification — instead of turning them to national ornament. Hence sculpture has been little cultivated, architecture more, though in peculiar style, and painting most of all. But while the sacredness of religion, or the manliness of history, has occupied the Italian pencil generally, of the older masters especially, Venice has sent forth her lordly senators, splendid banquets, and naked beauties. From the twelfth century, we have already seen, a movement might be discerned in the arts of Venice. Her school of painting begins to attract notice under Antonello da Messina, who introduced oil colors. The Bellinis carried out his improvements; and as pupils of the youngest, we discover Giorgione and Titian, who, with Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, Sebastian del Piombo, Schiavone, and Bassano, were the chief masters of this school.

But of Venetian painting the great ornament is Titian, whose name is synonymous with the characteristic of the native school — fine coloring. From this, however, we are not to suppose, as is too frequently done, that he was wanting in the higher principles of his profession. The alleged imperfection of his design will not often be detected, and only in momentary action of the parts; for in the more common modifications of form, it is faultless, and of inani-

mate nature the drawing and painting of his landscapes is unrivalled. In expression he is the most historical of all painters, his portraits being second only to those of Raphael. In careful imitation of natural effect, he is equal to the most pains-taking of the Dutch school; yet, with such grandeur and breadth in the masses, that, as has been justly remarked, the most imperfect sketch in which the original disposition in this respect is preserved, will present a character of high art. The chief defect of Titian was in composition and poetical fancy; he penetrated the very secrets of nature in all her varied effects and minutest shades of tone and hue—but he neither made selections of her forms, nor possessed the power of correcting her defects, by an ideal standard. In this mastery of coloring, three principles may be remarked; first, the interposing medium between the eye and the object is supposed to be a mellow golden light; secondly, the most glowing and gorgeous lights are produced, not so much by rich local tints as by the general conduct of the the whole piece, in which the gradations of tone are almost evanescent, yet in their strongest hues powerfully contrasted. Hence the final splendor is effected rather by painting in under-tones, than by lavishing on particular spots the whole riches of the palette. The shadows and under-tones, also, are enlivened by a thousand local hues and flickering lights, and his masses by innumerable varieties and play of parts; yet all softened, and blended, and combined by an undefinable harmony. Hence, nothing more easy than apparently to copy Titian—nothing more difficult than really to imitate his faithfulness and splendor. The third principle refers to his practice; the colors are laid on pure, without mixing, in tints by reiterated application, and apparently with the point of the pencil.

Titian died in 1576, at the venerable age of 96 or 99, having survived the glory of the Venetian school, the last disciple of decided eminence being Tintoretto, called the lightning of the pencil, from his miraculous despatch. The Bassans are powerful colorists, and wonderfully true to nature. Paul Veronese wantons in all the luxuriance of fresh and magnificent coloring, but is correct neither in taste nor drawing. Giorgione, of all the early Venetian masters, gave greatest promise of uniting purity with splendor, but died in 1511, at the age of 33;—thus leaving Titian, to whom he had in some measure been instructor, to reap an undivided harvest of fame.

In the annals of genius, no name bears more strongly on the popular sense attached to the term of a heaven-born inspiration, superior to circumstances and independent of tuition, than that of Antonio Leti — better known as Corregio. This artist, who was born about 1494, and died at the age of 40, is the model rather than the founder of the Lombard school. From the bosom of poverty, without master, without patron, without even the commonest appliances of his art, he bursts at once upon the view in all the blaze of original talent — unpraised, unknown — in an age of knowledge, to sink unmarked like the meteor of the desert, leaving but the memorials of his graceful pencil — in his own phrase, ‘anch’ io son pittore’ — to cry aloud that he also was a painter, — that such a man, contemporary with Raphael and Michael Angelo, and their nearest compeer, should have lived in ignorance of them, of Rome, of the antique, of all but nature — to die at last unrewarded in Parma — is utterly inexplicable. The principal works of this master are the two noble cupolas of the cathedral churches of Parma, painted in fresco — one subject the *Assumption of the Virgin*, the other the *Ascension of the Saviour*. Of his easel paintings, the most

precious, representing a Holy Family, and called the 'Night,' is in the Dresden gallery. The beauties of Corregio are grace and exquisite management of light and color, united with inexpressible harmony, — 'thus was completed the round of art.' 'Everything I see,' says Annibale Caracci, on beholding fifty years afterwards these works of Corregio, 'astonishes me, particularly the coloring and beauty of the children, who live, breathe, and smile, with so much sweetness and vivacity, that we are constrained to sympathize in their enjoyment.' 'The clearness and relief, the sweetness and freedom of pencil, in the works before us, have indeed never been exceeded, but correctness is not one of their elements. Neither the most beautiful forms, nor the most pleasing groupings, are preferred to the most ungraceful upon any principle of abstract elegance, but the whole composed and selected in obedience to the distribution of light and the gradation of tone. In expression, the same system is pursued; for here Corregio has endeavored habitually to impress the soft hues and undulating lines which rapture and joy leave on the countenance. Beyond these, of ideal, he appears to have had no conception. Every form wears the stamp of living nature, and his coloring is the very reflection of natural bloom. He wanted force, which, with the defect of elevation, renders the whole effect, though delightfully soft and graceful, sometimes effeminate and monotonous. Yet Raphael alone united a greater variety of different excellences.

We have now surveyed the labours and merits of the old masters — the patriarchs of modern art. The establishment of the four primitive schools embraces likewise the golden age of painting. How brief was the reign of lofty genius! The same individual might have lived with all the masters now enumerated, — he might have survived them all, — beholding the art in its infancy, and in its



manhood, he might have witnessed also its decline, and yet have viewed all this within the ordinary span of existence. The same brevity in the duration of excellence we also remarked in the arts of Greece. Is it, then, the fate of the human spirit, like human institutions, to fall away immediately on attaining a degree of perfection? or rather, is not this evidence of powers which shall hereafter expand, grow, and unfold their activities, — here on earth chilled, and cramped, and broken?

Among the minor fathers of the art who not unworthily supported the glory of the sixteenth century, and who continue the history of painting in the Roman and Florentine schools through the remainder of that period, the chief were the immediate disciples of Raphael and Michael Angelo. The favorite pupil of the former, Julio Romano, was an artist of highly poetic imagination, but less informed with pure taste than his master; his ambition appears to have aimed at uniting the grace of his instructor with the science and energy of Florence. Penni, Perin del Vaga, Polidore Caravaggio, and Maturino, not unsuccessfully studied in the same school; but we find a gradual disappearance of the more simple style of Raphael, and long before the middle of the century, the two schools may almost be said to have merged in the overwhelming despotism of the principles of Michael Angelo. Even the names now mentioned, though at first following the Roman in their later works, are scarcely to be distinguished from the disciples of the Florentine school. Of those who were truly disciples of the latter, and who derived their science immediately from the founder, was Daniel de Volterra, who survived till 1566. The designs of this latter have frequently been assigned to his master; and in the opinion of Poussin, his Descent from the Cross, in fresco, in the church of Trinita del

Monte at Rome, is — or rather was, for it perished under French experiment, — one of the three best pictures in the world. Andrea del Sarto was more an independent master, who held between the two styles, and added better coloring than either. Mazzuoli, better known as Parmegiano, though by birth and early study belonging to the school of Corregio, his better taste was formed at Rome; his style of design is noble, coloring forcible, and general effect sweet and gracious. He died in 1540, ten years after the preceding. But of all the followers of Michael Angelo, Tibaldi approached nearest to the sublimity, without the extravagance, of his model. It soon becomes difficult, indeed impossible, to follow decidedly the division of the ancient schools. In the progress of the century, their principles become united in the works of the minor painters, who are henceforth to be distinguished by the place of their birth, rather than by their style. The design of Michael Angelo prevailed; but to this were added, in proportion to the abilities of the artist, the various discoveries of the other masters. The art however, was in rapid retrogression. A style which suited only the most transcendent genius, which only under such inspiration could be at all pleasing, and from whose sublimity one step led into the turgid and the false, became a most dangerous instrument of ill in the hands of mere imitators. The ingrafting, also, upon its severe simplicity, the more luxurious modes of Venice and Lombardy, tended still more effectually to extinguish character and truth of distinctive representation.

Towards the close of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth century, the progress of decline was stayed for a time by the establishment of a new school. This was the Bolognese or Eclectic, founded by the Caracci, and which, in some measure, was the concentration of all

the Lombard artists, who, separately following, in a great measure, the style of Corregio, had yet never united into a seminary of which that master could be called the head. The grand principle of this new academy, and thence deriving the appellation of Eclectic, was to select what was most excellent in the primitive schools; design from the Florentine, and grace from the Roman, from the Venetian color, from the Lombard light and shade, uniting all in due proportion and harmonious effect. The plan was arduous and aspiring, but the idea was good; the failure which ensued, for, abating the success of individual talent, the final result disappointed expectation, arose not from the intention pursued, but from the means employed. The Bolognese masters sought to effect the combination of these elements by rules of art, instead of taking nature as the connecting and vivifying principle. In the study of her effects they would have found the very union they contemplated—the previous separation, in fact, of pictorial excellence into departments, had been occasioned by partial or peculiar views of nature. Still the success of the attempt was great, and threw the last rays of glory over the native seat of modern art.

The founders and great ornaments of this school were the three Caracci; Ludovico the eldest, born in 1555, died in 1619, was the instructor of his two cousins—Agostino, three years younger, and Annibale, born in 1560, both of whom Ludovico survived. The association formed by these relatives was, in the strictest sense of the term, a *school* of design, and conducted upon an admirable plan; students being instructed in anatomy, in drawing, in painting, and in the principles of composition, by actual superintendence and personal instruction. The unaffected breadth, solemnity, yet grace of effect—the simplicity of character, which distinguish the works of

Ludovico, are justly admired. Augustino excelled more in the theory than the practice of his art ; but one of the best pictures of this school, the St Jerome of the Certosa, is his. Engravings by him are numerous and valuable. Of all the Caracci, Annibale is the most magnificent in his compositions, and may be taken as the true representative of the school ; bold, splendid, broad, his pencil deals its touches with firm, almost unerring certainty, to its aim — but too frequently that aim is style in art, rather than truth in feeling.

Of the immediate pupils of the Bolognese academy, the first undoubtedly is the modest and tender Domenichino. Though participating in the common fault of his school, loaded design, yet his heads have a feeling and expression approaching to the sublime in sentiment. The Communion of St Jerome is pronounced by Poussin to be one of the three best pictures in the world — the Transfiguration of Raphael, and Volterra's Descent from the Cross, completing the number. We shall not easily forget our impressions on beholding the Transfiguration and the Communion side by side in the Vatican. Guido's name instantly calls up all our associations of the graceful and the benign ; but his expression is too often artificial : perhaps in his works we first decidedly mark those academic abstractions and refinements of precept, which, formed independently of nature, hastened the downfall of art in this its last resting place. Guercino wants power and individual character ; Albani is agreeable and poetic, the painter of the Loves and Graces. Carlo Dolce, a Florentine, imitates Guido. Lanfranco is bold, but incorrect in his design ; as are likewise Pietro Cortona, and Luca Giordano, mannerists in whom is lost every distinction of character. Contemporary with the Carracci, but self-taught, and belonging to no school, was Caravaggio,



strong but ungraceful in design, harsh in the disposition of his lights, but of undoubted genius:—his pupil was Spagnoletto. The history of painting in Italy, at least of painting animated by genius, may be closed with the name of Salvator Rosa, who died in 1673, 'the only native landscape painter which that delightful and picturesque country has produced. The old masters, indeed, have left the grandest and most perfect landscape compositions—but these are subservient to the figures. Rosa succeeded in both, and stands nobly, but peculiarly, original in an age of decay and mannerism.

The eighteenth century opens under the auspices of Carlo Maratti, an affected mannerist, but not altogether devoid of talent. After his death, in 1713, his rivals, Garzi and Cignani, sustained for a little the expiring reputation of the Roman school. But it is quite unnecessary to continue the narrative; the state of the arts during the early part of this century has already been noticed, and the names of Bianchi, Costanzi, Manchini, the early contemporaries of Canova, and of the revival, are now forgotten. The only artists of those times still regarded with some respect, are, Solemena, who died in 1747; Sebastian Conca, in 1764; and Pompeo Battoni, who brings down the history of the art to 1787; Mengs belongs to Germany.

Over the living art of Italy, Camuccini at Rome, and Benvenuti at Florence, preside. The former is perhaps the best draughtsman in Europe, but is inferior as a colorist; he wants depth, harmony, and force; his grouping also is defective in richness and variety, approaching too nearly to the linear as in relievo. His expression, though noble, is cold—deficient in that warm gush of sentiment, which, in the ancient masters, seemed to 'create a soul under the ribs of death.' Benvenuti excels his contemporary as a colorist, in the disposition of his group, and in

the force of *chiar' oscuro*; but in purity of drawing, in classical taste, and in the selection of form, he is inferior. Each has chosen his subjects principally from profane history. Camuccini's best performance is the Departure of Regulus; Benvenuti's a scene in the recent history of Saxony. Rome possesses several other good painters, but few natives — for, to the artist as to the poet of every nation, she has become

‘ — His country — city of the soul.’

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## CHAPTER XII.

THE Trans-alpine schools of painting now demand attention. The German is usually divided into three distinct schools — the German, properly so called, the Flemish, and the Dutch. These distinctions are rather local than depending upon characteristic difference of manner. Indeed, prior to the age of Durer, the only style discernible in the schools is that named Gothic, common more or less to all the states of Europe, but especially indigenous in Germany. The expression, then, is here employed not altogether in its vague and generic sense of anything stiff and formal — for these early or Gothic pictures exhibit a specific character both of design and execution. They are painted upon wood, usually oak, covered sometimes with canvass, always with a white ground, upon which the outline of the subject is sketched, and the whole overlaid with gilding. This last forms the real grounding of the picture, which is painted in water or size-color, with great care and diligence of finish, often with considerable felicity of

effect, and always with more of the simplicity of individual nature than occurs in any other works of the same age and description. This early school terminated in the fifteenth century, from the more general diffusion of oil-painting; its principal masters were Schoen, the Bon Martino of the Italians, born in 1420, painter and engraver; Wohlgemuth, the instructor of Durer; and Mueller, or Kranach, Burgomaster of Wittenberg, and friend of Luther. But the prince of German artists is Albert Durer, born at Nuremberg in 1471 — the Da Vinci of this school, as excelling in science and in art. His works in painting and engraving are equally admirable, evincing knowledge of the best principles of imitation. They still retain a degree of constraint — a remnant of the Gothic manner, of which the habits and prejudices of his countrymen, and his own ignorance of the antique, prevented the removal. Want of dignified design and grandeur of composition, hard and meagre outline, are his defects; truth, originality, and simplicity of thought, good coloring, and the invention, or at least perfecting, of etching on copper, form his contributions to the arts. His contemporary, and, in portraits, superior, was Holbein, best known in England, and whose works, in the reign of Henry VIII., are excellent examples of the school; his successors, in departing from the national style, become blended with the minor Italian masters — for the German school ceases to be original or distinct when it ceases to be Gothic. After Schwartz Rolenhamer, and others of the sixteenth century, who painted history in the Italian manner, Germany sent forth chiefly landscape painters, as Bauer, Elzhaimer, and others, who finished in a style exquisitely delicate and natural.

Commercial wealth, the comparative independence and activity which always accompany industrious enterprise,

rendered the Flemish cities, from a very early period, famous in painting. In fact, many of their most lucrative branches of trade — tapestry, embroidery, jewellery — depended upon, and, as in the Italian republics, aided the progress of design. Few characteristics of a national style, however, are to be found in the history of art in the Low Countries, as distinct from Germany, prior to the close of the sixteenth century. To John of Bruges, better known as Van Eyck, a Flemish painter about the beginning of the fifteenth century, has been ascribed the discovery of oil colors; but though the discovery appears rather to have been a gradual improvement, commencing from a much earlier date, he certainly first brought the practice into general use. The painters of the Flemish and Dutch schools were thus put early in possession of an advantage, contributing principally to the distinguishing qualities of art in these countries — fine coloring and exquisite finish. The method, indeed, necessarily introduced these properties, as may also be remarked in Italy, where the Venetian masters, who first obtained the secret, continued to surpass, as they had taken the lead, in sweetness and splendor of pencilling. Lucas Van Leyden and Mabeuse, far surpassed Van Eyck, and indeed rivalled their German contemporaries, Durer and Holbein; while, in the subsequent century, artists are numerous who carried to a high perfection the characteristics of the school — imitation of nature, and wonderful minuteness of finish — such as Brill, Stenwyck, Spranger, the Brueghils, and Van Veen.

Rubens was born of an honorable family, at Antwerp, in 1577, and died in 1640. This powerful and prolific artist, whose works are abundantly scattered over the whole of Europe, gave to the Flemish school the consideration attendant on separate and dignified character.



Had Rubens, indeed, united to brilliancy of coloring, rapidity of composition, and splendor of general effect, the elevation of form and sentiment which ennoble the thoughts of the old masters, his name would justly have ranked amongst the highest in art. But the seductions of the Venetian, and the bravura of the Lombard style, had for him more attraction than the majesty of the Florentine, or the grace and pathos of the Roman pencil. There is in his style, however, a dexterous compensation for defects, which, more than in any other, momentarily seduces the judgment from propriety. His defect of expression is concealed in the richness, the lavish variety, of his figures and grouping; the incorrectness of his forms is forgotten in beholding their almost mobile elasticity; the absence of lofty interest passes unmarked amid the striking contrasts and picturesque impressions of the general effect. Over the whole is thrown the most gorgeous coloring, the play of reflected lights, the magnificence of almost shifting, yet ever harmonious hues and luxuriance of ornament; — like the golden flood from the stained window, pouring its radiance over the irregular but magical combinations of the Gothic aisle. The landscapes of Rubens are delightful; they have the freshness, the clearness, the variety of nature, and a far deeper sentiment of her beauty than his histories or portraits — the last, indeed, are the least meritorious of his works. But we shall qualify or support our own by the opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose summary of the character of Rubens is as follows: ‘In his composition his art is too apparent; his figures have expression, and act with energy, but without simplicity or dignity. His coloring, in which he is eminently skilled, is notwithstanding too much of what we call tinted. Throughout the whole of his works, there is a proportionable want of that nicety of distinction and ele-

gance of mind, which is required in the higher walks of painting; to this want, it may in some degree be ascribed, that those qualities that make the excellence of this subordinate style, appear in him with the greatest lustre.' The Crucifixion at Antwerp is his masterpiece; the Allegories of Mary de Medici in the Louvre his largest work; but some of the most finished smaller pictures which we have seen are in the Rubens-gallery, in the palace of Frederic at Potzdam.

The contemporaries of Rubens were independent masters or disciples. Among the former were Van Voss Strada, Miel Savary Seegers; among the latter, Snyders, Jordains, Teniers, and especially Vandyke. Rather later, lived Schwaneveldt in landscape, and Neef for interiors, &c.; but the influence of the principles or precepts of Rubens animated the whole of their efforts. In point of manner and subject, Teniers and Vandyke may in some measure be considered as forming the extremes of the Flemish schools, though in respect of merit they stand in the first rank. Teniers, for instance, connects the Flemish with the Dutch style, being more elevated in the general tone of his conceptions and manner than the latter, while he has selected a less dignified walk than Rubens. He has painted with exquisite truth, and very great beauty of pencil, the customs, scenes, amusements, and character of his countrymen. Vandyke, again, in the grace and dignity of his portraits, in the intellectuality of his expression and composition, seems to effect a junction between the common and broad nature of the native taste, with the ideal of Italian art. The pictures painted by Vandyke during the early period of his residence in England, are among the finest specimens of portraiture. Here, indeed, in some respects, as the clearness and transparency of his carnations, he is excelled only by Titian,—in the

graceful air of the heads, and beautiful drawing of the extremities, he reminds us of Raphael, — while, to these qualities, he has added a silvery tone of pencilling, which, more so than in any other master, gives back the delicate and varied hues of real flesh and skin. He has hardly succeeded in history, more, however, from want of practice than genius; for his alleged want of fancy seems not so apparent as has been supposed. In Vandyke, we find a most striking proof that excellence in art is founded upon no abstract theory of the ideal, but in selecting, and sedulously adhering to, some one view of nature: hence — hence alone,

‘The soft precision of the clear Vandyke.’

What Rubens had accomplished for the Flemish school in giving to it nationality and a head, Rembrandt some time after conferred upon that of Holland; but between the two cases there is this difference, — the former has identified his principles and reputation with the whole of succeeding art in his country, — these principles, also, are founded in a more comprehensive view of nature and of imitation; the latter has merely given a consistency to the scattered details and individual artists of the Dutch school, by concentrating attention upon one, while he has given a singular but most powerful delineation of nature. He stands alone, not only among his countrymen, a gigantic workman among the minute laborers of cabbages, butchers’ shops, and green-grocers’ stalls, but he is a solitary master in the schools of Europe. The style of Rembrandt it is easy to distinguish, but difficult to characterise. It is at once natural and highly artificial — original, yet excessively mannered. It is natural; for every object, no matter what, is represented just as it appears, without alteration, improvement, or addition — but the medium of

visibility, if the expression may be allowed, the mode in which nature is exposed, is a complete artifice; no inventor was ever more original in his system, but none less varied in its application; — if we have seen one picture of Rembrandt, we have seen all, as far as respects his principles, for he has only two. In his practice he is at once bold, even to coarseness, and elaborately finished — his coloring is delicate, yet placed frequently in lumps upon the canvass. But to attempt a positive description: of the two principles of the Dutch master, one respects the manner of delineating, the other of exhibiting, nature. He appears to have regarded art as without power or control over the character or form of the subject — these were to be most faithfully preserved, and most minutely copied. This formed his first principle, to which he has most rigidly adhered. But as natural objects present different modifications in appearance, according to the quantity and direction of the light which falls upon them, and since this can be artificially varied at the will of the artist, here Rembrandt fixed his second, and what may be termed his ideal principle. In the schools of Italy, we have seen that the management of light had been brought to very great perfection, especially by Titian, Corregio, and their best instructed followers. Their method was diffusion — to unite, by secondary, the principal lights, and both, by a gradation of under-tone, with the darkest shadows, avoiding strong contrasts. Indeed, the Venetian master has shown, in his practice, that strong opposition, neither of light nor color, was necessary to powerful effect; and Corregio, on the same principle, has painted much in demi, or neutral tone. These precepts Rubens also had discovered in his Italian studies, and afterwards constantly practised; Vandyke, by the same method, has given that extraordinary softness and delicacy which sits so divinely upon his female counte-



nances. Rembrandt pursued a method directly the reverse; he concentrated his light into one meteoric blaze, directed in full power upon one spot — to which all other forms are sacrificed in deep gloom — and upon which the whole riches of his palette are heaped. He placed nature, as it were, in a dungeon, while, through one solitary loophole, the beam of heaven seems, with ten-fold force, to penetrate to the object of the artist's immediate contemplation. This, spreading a dazzling, yet solemn light over all, invests the commonest forms with an unknown interest, and gives to the grossest and most unclassical imitation an elevated and romantic character, — just as the uncertain gloom of twilight mantles in the shadowy terrors and strange shapes, objects the most familiar in ordinary day. In the same style are painted the landscapes of Rembrandt, equally valued, and more true than even his figures. The rest of the Dutch masters have little of distinctive excellence; the imitation of all is wonderful in its fidelity, minuteness, and beauty; but human talent, and weeks of precious time, wasted upon a cabbage leaf, or a few fish upon a board, is after all but a melancholy theme, which we shall despatch with a catalogue of names. Before or contemporary with Rembrandt, who died in 1674, we have Hæmskirk, Both, Metzu, Blæmart, Breenberg, Polemberg, Bhergem, Cuyp, Wynants, Heem, Mieris, Vangoyn, Schalken, Van der Neer, Van der Warf. A higher class of artists were Wouvermans, Laar, and Gherard Douw, the most careful of painters. These and others now mentioned placed the ideal of art in the most scrupulous delineation of nature — the most elaborate truth and transparent coloring; and it cannot be denied, that they approached their ideal nearer than did the Italian masters to theirs. But more glory accrued from the attempt than in the success.

The arts of the Low Countries, so long an appendage of the crown of Spain, naturally lead to those of that kingdom. No regular Spanish school of painting appears at any time to have existed, though the art has been very successfully practised by numerous artists. Of these the chief are Velasquez, equally eminent in history and portrait; and Murillo, a delightful colorist, and distinguished for natural feeling, though often vulgar, and rarely dignified, in his choice of forms. He is the most original of all the great masters of Spain, who have generally been indebted to Italy. Morales, Herrera, with many others, might be mentioned, but we have not seen their works. The principal seats of painting, in Spain, were Madrid and Seville; the school holds intermediate rank between those of Venice and Flanders—its chief beauty is truth of character, natural expression and fine coloring, correct, but not elevated, design.

In France, or by French artists, painting has been practised with much individual success; and though academies have been formed, and government protection long and liberally afforded, it would yet be difficult exactly to describe in what the characteristics of the national style of art in France consist. In that country, taste, as respects painting, has fluctuated more, and from the first has been less deeply impressed with original traits, than as regards any other of the fine arts. Voltaire has remarked, that a people may have a music and poetry pleasing only to themselves, and yet both good; but in painting, though their genius may be peculiar, it can be genuine only as it is agreeable to, and prized by, all the world. Tried by this rule, French painting seems to be neither correct nor pleasing, and it is not universal, that is inventive, in its peculiarity of manner. In her early efforts, France was indebted to Italy, and in her subsequent labors the Italian

method of design has prevailed ; indeed, her artists have here rather copied than imitated, adding, no doubt, what have been termed *les graces Françaises* — an expression ill-naturedly, but not without truth, translated, ‘French grimaces.’ It is rare, perhaps impossible, to find originality where taste has not been naturally, and to a considerable extent, cultivated prior to the introduction of extrinsic knowledge. Art borrowed in a state of forwardness, can receive no new nor valuable modifications from unskilful hands and unpractised fancy. On the other hand, when thought has been independently exercised, refinement, engrafted upon its bold, though perhaps rude strength, will receive novel combinations and freshness of character ; while the reception of more perfect modes in the same walk, will but improve the faculties, without oppressing the powers, of native genius. Again, the fluctuations of painting observable during its progress in France, appear to have arisen chiefly from the influence which favorite masters have been able to exercise over the art universally in that country. — Nor has the influence often been that of pure talent. Court intrigue, during the most favorable epochs, has raised to court employment, and consequently to pre-eminence in the honors and emoluments of his profession, some individual, who thus became possessed of the means of rendering his brethren eager to obtain his countenance by imitation of his style. Thus we have the schools of Vouet, of Le Brun, of David, distinguished merely by adherence to the particular manner of these masters ; with some exception in the last, which is founded most on general principles. This, however, is only an effect growing out of a far more general cause of imperfection in French art, namely, the absence of all true national interest. Among the French, painting has hitherto, during the most prosperous periods, formed the

amusement or the luxury of their rulers; though as contributing to the external pomp, splendor, and show of their '*monarchie*,' the people have been trained to applaud. There never has been mutual sympathy between the artist and his countrymen; he drew his encouragement, and looked for his reward, from other and far less ennobling inspiration than their praise. That incense which not unfrequently was really kindled at the Muses' flame, was burnt before the idols set up by a despot, instead of being offered to the majesty of national feeling. In confirmation of these remarks, so congenial with the whole history of art as an intellectual attainment, we have only to refer to the reigns of Louis XIII., XIV., XV.; more especially of the second, whose selfish glory, the pursuit of his entire life, converted the most splendid of the arts into a vehicle of adulation, through fulsome and direct flattery, or glaring and far-fetched allegory. If, during the recent order of things, more respect was paid to real merit, and less to cabal than formerly, the same, nearly, was the isolation of the art from popular enthusiasm—it was still under the same thralldom to the cold and selfish aggrandisement of an individual; or, where this object seemed more directly connected with national exultation, the art was exercised on a theme, whose violent and artificial aspect is, throughout, unvaried, entirely destructive of natural expression and discrimination of character. The gold and glitter of military portraits—the unromantic combinations of modern warfare, with its mechanical levelling of distinctive peculiarities, were little calculated to rectify—they increased—the errors and the wants of French painting; while that which is absolutely good was derived from the colder forms of sculpture.

The most ancient labours of the art in France appear to have been on glass, and, as in every other country,



dedicated to the service of religion. Of these primitive specimens, many still remain of considerable beauty, as in the church of St-Genevieve at Paris. Another method, common also to Germany, and which, in the fourteenth century, had assumed the appearance of a regular and important branch of ingenuity, was a species of enamel, formed by the fusion of metallic colors with glass. Of this method, many remains of surprising beauty occur in the early part of the fifteenth century, which, with the Gothic paintings already described, seem to have exercised the ingenuity of his subjects, till the exertions of Francis I. for their improvement brought artists from Italy. Among these was the great Leonardo, who died at Fontainebleau, in the arms of this monarch, in 1524, and before he had exercised his pencil in France. Copies of his works, especially of the Last Supper, were executed for Francis, who was desirous of carrying off the original with the wall upon which it is painted.\*

The intervening period from the death of Francis to the commencement of the seventeenth century, torn by religious dissension, distracted by the heartless intrigue, and still more heartless massacres perpetrated by the Catholic party, threw France back in the career of improvement. The splendid reign of Henry of Navarre was favorable indeed both to the fine and useful arts; but, as in the former age, foreign, and principally Flemish artists, were employed. The imbecile Louis XIII. has the credit of having first formed a native school of painting, or rather, perhaps, in this reign, advantage was first taken of those various circumstances which had gradually been forming both skill and taste in France. This, like every other

\* The best of these confirm the former remarks on this accomplished artist.

measure of the same period, is to be attributed to the prime minister, Richelieu, founder also of the Academy. This was the source whence were supplied the artists of the succeeding reign, who were principally disciples of Vouet, the first French master of eminence, born in 1582, but whose merits in the nobler walks of art would not otherwise entitle him to notice.

The glory, not only of this period, but of the history of French art, is Nicholas Poussin — the classic and the virtuous Poussin. To his contemporaries, however, or to the retainers in the halls of Louis, he did not properly belong. Born in 1594, he had formed his taste by a residence of nearly twenty years in Italy, before he was invited, in 1639, to a pension and an apartment in the Tuileries. From the cabals of a court, and the petty jealousy of the inferior Vouet, he fled beyond the Alps to his own loved Rome, never to return. There he conversed more with antiquity than with living men. Thence originated the grand defect of his style. ‘We never,’ says a moralist, ‘live out of our age, without missing something which our successors will wish we had possessed.’ This is especially true in the present instance. The characteristics of the works of Poussin are extreme correctness of form and costume, great propriety in keeping, and the most enchanting simplicity of design. These beauties he derived from constant study and deep knowledge of ancient sculpture. While he thus followed closely one of the sources of excellence, he, however, neglected the other, and, in painting, the more important — nature. Hence the frequent want of interest — the defects of expression — the cold and sombre coloring — the absence of that breathing similitude which animates even the subjects of his intense contemplation. But the ancient sculptors were not satisfied with nature at second-hand — the great

cause of failure in the painter. The perfections of their statues he transferred to his canvass, forgetting that these were copied from men. In the choice of his subject, and manner of representing its incidents, Poussin has few equals; in his pictures, too, there is always a most charming harmony of thought—the scene—the figures—the handling—even the forms of inanimate objects in his landscapes, all have an antique air, transporting the imagination into an ideal world. Hence, of all those who have made the attempt, Poussin has best succeeded in classical allegory.

Louis XIV., who commenced his reign in 1643, resolved to complete the intentions of his predecessor, in giving to France a school of native artists; and, by the institution of academies, conferring rewards, and raising to honors, so far accomplished his purpose, as respected the cultivation of the art by Frenchmen, to a very considerable extent. The school, however, thus created, was composed of imitators in their profession, and flatterers of their royal patron. True, vigorous, original genius, lives not to be called forth at the smile of a monarch, nor by permission to display its powers in painted panegyrics on the walls of a palace. As well might we expect, in the artificial atmosphere of the hothouse, the strength, and beauty, and freshness, which bloom amid glades and groves, freely visited by the pure breath of heaven.

The great master of this school was Le Brun, for so the Scotch name of Brown, from a family of which name he was descended, has been translated. He was born in 1619, of a family long attached to the practice of the arts, and became the favorite pupil of Vouet, whose precepts in many respects he too faithfully retained. Yet Le Brun had good capabilities,—a lively fancy, great dexterity of hand, and not unfrequently noble conceptions.

But in all things he is too artificial — a defect never redeemable by any display even of the most splendid technical qualities. In the paintings of Le Brun, the want of simplicity is conspicuous in the forced attitudes of his figures, and in their too systematic expression. Both these imperfections have resulted from the same cause — neglect of nature, neglect operating by different effects. In the former case, the artist has designed too much from memory, or — a common fault, we should be inclined to say, in French art — has taken his attitudes from the theatre. In the second, it is easy to perceive, that he aimed at reducing the infinite and minute changes of expression to a theory of academic rules; indeed, his pictures are but commentaries, in this respect, upon his celebrated treatise on the Passions. The coloring in these performances is glaring, without firmness of shadow, and the local tones are false; hence the general effect is shallow, with a monotony of hue, arising, not so much from want of variety in the tints, as from error in keeping. The best works of Le Brun are the five grand pictures from the life of Alexander, which, notwithstanding the defects inherent in his style, are productions of dignity and grandeur, exhibiting great fertility both of composition and of resource in mechanic art; but surely Voltaire must intend his assertion to be restricted to France, when he says, that engravings of these paintings are more sought after than those of the battles of Constantine, by Raphael and Julio Romano.

The truth of the preceding remarks on the causes which have contributed, in France, to the mediocrity of painting, is placed in a striking view by the tyranny, the absolute despotism, in which Le Brun was enabled to lord it over his contemporaries, whether painters, sculptors, or architects. Every one was forced to become the obser-



vant servitor of him whom the court favored, or enjoyed the option of remaining unemployed. Such was the fate of Le Sueur, not merely the superior of Le Brun, but, with the exception of Poussin, to whom even in some respects he is more than equal, the best painter France has ever produced — the sole one in whose works are found natural simplicity and repose. He took Raphael for his model, whose feeling, sober grace, and internal dignity, do not contribute even now to render his imitation popular. If Le Sueur were less frequently inferior to himself, he would have stood in the first rank of his profession, though he died in 1655, at the early age of thirtyeight. Bourdon, Valentin, and Megnard, were also contemporaries, and in some respects equals, of Le Brun.

To this period, though only by chronology, and to France merely by birth, belongs Claude Gelee, better known as Claude Lorrain, from his native province, where he was born in 1600, dying in his 88th year at Rome, where he resided during the greater part of the reigns of Louis XIII. and XIV., having never crossed the Alps after leaving home as the runaway apprentice of a pastry-cook. To this artist, self-taught, and at first apparently more than commonly incapable, landscape painting owes its interest and its loveliness as a separate and dignified branch of art. In the sweetest, as in the most brilliant, effects of light — from the first blush of day to the fall of dewy eve, Claude is unrivalled, or even unapproached, if in one or two instances we except our own Wilson. The aerial perspective, and the liquid softness of the tones, in his pictures, — the leafing, forms, and branching of the trees, the light flickering clouds, the transparency of hue, the retiring distances, all make as near approaches to nature as it is possible for art to accomplish. Still there is one grand defect in the representations of Claude, which

to a degree destroys the natural effect of their constituent features; — they are too frequently compositions, or what are termed heroic landscape. This certainly heightens the charm merely as respects the imagination, but detracts from the still deeper interests of reality. For this practice, which, indeed, is too common with landscape painters, there can be found also no plea, till it has been proved that the majesty and variety of nature are unequal to the powers of the pencil.

The French painters of the eighteenth century were numerous, and on the whole superior to those of the same era in Italy. Throughout the whole, however, we detect the principles of the school of Louis XIV., as respects the individual qualities of the art; while in the philosophy of taste, more especially as affects painting, are discoverable the effects of the mechanical and systematic criticism — the mere pedantry of learning, which, originating with the writers of that age, spread over Europe, nor, in art, is yet entirely exploded. Casés is one of the most eminent of native artists, who was overlooked during his lifetime; but what is the meaning of Voltaire's remark on this artist? 'Chaque nation cherche à se faire valoir; les Français font valoir les autres nations en tout genre.' The taste of this writer in the fine arts is not less contemptible than in the principles of nobler literature, and in religion. The tawdry nudities which we have seen still suspended in the *Salle de Tableaux*, at Ferney, are a practical testimony of the one fact; and, place serving, it would be no difficult matter to prove the other, or rather, we trust, it needs no exposition. Santerre studied nature, designs with correctness, and colors agreeably, but he rises not above mediocrity; nor will it be admitted, as asserted by his countrymen, that his picture of Adam and Eve is one of the best in modern art. The two Parrocels

and Bourgoyn painted combats, chiefly of horsemen. Jouvenet shows talent in design, but colors too yellow; is remarkable as having painted in old age with his left hand. Rigaud is called the French Rubens. Le Moine, in the Apotheosis of Henry IV. at Versailles, has left a striking and well-colored composition, but one of those incongruous allegories, which, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, formed the besetting sin of French art. La Fosse, the two Boulognes, De Troy, Raous, Tremoilliere, and especially Vanloo, in history; Vateau, in grotesque subjects; Desportes and Audry, in animals; Vernet, the admirable marine painter, with others of less note, bring down our researches to the middle of the last century.

The founder and the representative of the modern French school is David. Born in 1750, he early saw and forsook the conventional feebleness, and, to a great degree, the false glare, of contemporaries, and thus merits the appellation of restorer of art. Unfortunately, however, he engaged in other revolutions than those of taste, and participated too largely in the atrocities which desecrated the close of last century. As one of the regicides, he was, at the restoration, driven into exile — a useless severity, which might have been spared in favor of one who has contributed largely to the solid glory of his country. He died at Brussels in 1825. The leading defect of preceding art in France, is a want of dignified and correct form; next, of simple and natural expression. The former the genius of David detected, and sought to apply the remedy in the careful study of antique sculpture. In this he has been far from unsuccessful; his drawing is most correct, his style of design noble, but both are cold and without feeling. The second defect David either did not discover, or has failed in rectifying. The system which he pursued was in part excellent, but

he followed it too exclusively. Statuary can give little to painting beyond form and proportion — the essentials, indeed — but expression, action, not less true and dignified, but more varied, and composition, not to mention coloring, must be added from nature. Here David has failed. He either conceived that the artists who preceded him wanted only form to render French art perfect, or that, by grouping the statuary of ancient Greece in more violent and complicated action, and with more vehemence of expression, pictures would be produced, such, to use his own words, ‘that if an Athenian were to return to this world, they might appear to him the works of a Greek painter.’ Like Poussin, then, he lived too much for antiquity, and too little with the present; but if Poussin has often given to representations of the most perfect art, instead of delineations of nature, he has at least depicted antiquity as it is, in all its simplicity and perfect repose. David has not done this; he has completely changed, nay, inverted, the character of ancient art, by adding exaggerated expression and forced attitude. The coloring is also very indifferent; for though highly finished, the effect is hard and dry, without sweetness or depth; and while the general tone inclines to the bronze or metallic, the local tints are feeble or untrue. Here, likewise, we discover an endeavor at improvement failing through neglect of the proper object of study. Wishing to avoid the glaring hues of his predecessors, David has fallen into the opposite extreme from overlooking the living subject. The grouping, too, participates in the meagreness inseparable from the system, the arrangement of the figures often approaching to the basso-relievo, where they necessarily stand in lines, while, to relieve the sameness thus produced, the forms are violently and ungracefully contrasted in themselves. Of this a striking instance occurs in the famous



picture of the Horatii, who are ranged rank and file, receding from the spectator, so that only one is completely seen, the heads of the others being in profile, each with an arm and foot extended, one, by way of variety, reaching forth his left hand to take the oath dictated by the father, who stands on the opposite side! Without doubt, however, David was a man of great genius, and when he errs, it is more through defect of system than of talent; but the former being his own creation, he stands responsible for its faults. Besides that just quoted, his best performances are Leonidas with the Spartans at Thermopylæ, one of the best colored of his pictures, but the figure of the chief wants majesty; the Death of Socrates is destitute of that solemnity of repose, yet activity of feeling, which we have been accustomed to associate with the scene; the Funeral of Patroclus — a fine antique composition, but French in feeling; the Coronation of Napoleon — a splendid failure; the Rape of the Sabines — much fine drawing, and the usual share of bustle — expression extravagant, yet cold. In portrait, as might have been anticipated from the range of his studies, David was unequal to himself. His best performances in this walk are the numerous likenesses of his imperial patron. We have seen the original sketch for one of these, which indeed was never afterwards touched, taken during the last few hours of undiminished power possessed by Napoleon in Paris. The greater part of the preceding day and night had been spent in arranging the final operations of the campaign which terminated in the battle of Waterloo. When now past midnight, instead of retiring to repose, the emperor sent for David, to whom he had promised to sit, and who was in waiting in an apartment of the Tuileries. ‘My friend,’ said Napoleon to the artist, on entering, ‘there are yet some hours till four, when we are

finally to review the defences of the capital; in the meantime, *faites votre possible* — (do your utmost), while I read these despatches.' But exhausted nature could hold out no longer; the paper dropt from the nerveless hand, and Napoleon sunk to sleep. In this attitude the painter has represented him. The pale and lofty forehead, the care-worn features, the relaxed expression, the very accompaniments, wear an impress inexpressibly tender and melancholy. With the dawn Napoleon awoke, and springing to his feet, was about to address David, when a taper just expiring in the socket arrested his eye. Folding his arms on his breast, a usual posture of thought, he contemplated in silence its dying struggles. When with the last gleam the rays of the morning sun penetrated through the half closed window-curtains, 'Were I superstitious,' said Napoleon, a faint smile playing about his beautiful mouth, 'the first object on which my sight has rested this day might be deemed ominous; but,' pointing to the rising sun, 'the augury is doubtful — at least, the prayer of the Grecian hero will be accorded, — we shall perish in light!'

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### CHAPTER XIII.

THE history of Painting in England embraces only a very recent period in the annals of the art. But though chronologically, as well as from the peculiar interest of the subject, it is to be treated last, this arrangement is not adopted from the same motive as actuates foreign critics,

namely, the alleged inferiority of British painting. It has been shown, we trust satisfactorily, that in the real condition of taste, in the modes of practice and in the principles of theory, our school of Sculpture, though not equal in specimens yet produced, is superior to every other, not only now, but formerly, in Europe. In favor of our painters, we go further — and yet not so far. Pictures, and in more than one branch, painted in this country, and by native living artists, can be produced superior to any contemporary examples in any part of the Continent; but, in its theoretic principles, and in the practice introduced in consequence of these, the English school has sadly departed from the perfect labours and just science of the old masters. This has arisen from following a course in some respects opposite to that which has been adopted in sculpture, as shall hereafter be the endeavor to point out. Again, if we review our early history, it appears, that in the ages immediately subsequent to the revival of art, native artists in this country, in the ingenious processes then known, were not inferior to contemporary names in Italy, France, or Germany. It is sufficient here merely to refer to Walpole's interesting work; in which it is shown, that before the middle of the thirteenth century, two hundred years prior to Van Eyck, evidences are found of oil-painting in England; and that in the fourteenth, painting on glass, heraldic emblazonment, the illumination of manuscripts, with all the similar approaches to elegance then practised, were cultivated among our ancestors, and by natives whose names are preserved, with equal success as elsewhere.

Causes, therefore, originating in the moral and political condition of the people, can alone explain the striking inferiority of English art during the period of greatest splendor in its modern history. The opinions, indeed, promul-

gated by the French and Italian writers, not excepting Winklemann, and so complacently entertained even now on the Continent, respecting the deleterious influence of climate upon English genius, are, in their philosophy, too contemptible to merit serious investigation. Nor are similar theories of our own and other authors exempted from this censure, which ascribe excellence, as for instance in ancient Greece, to the propitious effects of the same physical cause. The mighty and the immortal energies of the human mind are independent of all other external causes; they will bear up against all other external pressure — save moral and political degradation.

In fact, art in England was crushed almost in its cradle by the civil wars of York and Lancaster. Warfare between different nations, where the struggle is from rivalry of interests or empire, rather favors the development of national talent; the activity of martial achievement conveys, through all the relations of citizenship, and to every field of honorable exertion, a corresponding vigor and elasticity of mind — an ardent love of glory and of country — raising high the spirit of emulation, yet binding closer the ties of fellowship. In the unhallowed commotion of civil contest, all these effects are reversed; while in England, the desecration of country consequent on such feuds was deeper than perhaps in any other instance of modern times, from religion, which in other states, under like unhappy circumstances, had afforded an asylum to arts and to peace, here taking part with the combatants. These political divisions healed, religious dissensions broke in upon the national quiet, at a time, too, when a taste for the fine arts was gaining ground in the different states of Europe. When at length every animosity and partial feeling had subsided in the generous consciousness of being Englishmen, an eager thirst for nautical enterprise



engaged the minds of the subjects of Elizabeth and James. The wealth, security, and information which flowed from these exertions, were beginning to create taste, and to provide means highly favorable to the future progress of painting. The predilections of Charles, likewise, as also his knowledge, were calculated to improve and to direct in the best manner these advantages. The collection of pictures which he formed was the most valuable then in Europe, and composed of pieces especially adapted to a national gallery, and to the design of creating a native school. The most eminent artists of the age, invited to his court, found their labors at once skilfully appreciated and munificently rewarded. This unfortunate monarch had the satisfaction to perceive the refinement beginning to spread among his subjects, even in the remotest and least opulent portion of his dominions. In Scotland, Jamieson, born at Aberdeen, in 1586, and pupil of Rubens, has left, in the universities of his native place and elsewhere, fruits of his genius which by no means show him unworthy of the appellation of the Scottish Vandyke. To this painter Charles sat, and further distinguished him by peculiar marks of royal favor. In England, painting was naturally still more flourishing in prospect; the nobles imitated, and some shared in, the taste of their sovereign, while a love of elegant acquirement was generally diffused. This period, also, was highly favorable to a new and aspiring epoch in English art, from the great and original acquirements previously made in poetry and elegant literature, which both prepared the public mind to relish similar displays of talent in a cognate branch; while they evinced and cherished that creative spirit which may render available the introduction of improved modes, without degenerating into imitation in its own efforts. The progress of successful art in Greece, and in republican Italy, with the

absence of nationality in that of ancient Rome and of modern France, exhibits the justice of the remark, and the importance of the acquisition. The reign of Charles, I. thus appears to have been one of the most favorable periods in our history for the foundation of a British school of art; indeed, we perceive that every essential towards this had been accomplished. The fearful concussions which closed in blood the career of that unhappy monarch, while they shook the entire realm from its propriety, proved more pernicious to the cultivation of the arts of elegance, than has usually been the case even in civil commotion. The lowest and most illiterate, now armed with some degree of power, destroyed, because they knew not how to value; while the coarse hypocrisy and more dangerous cunning, or the stern bigotry, of their leaders, viewed with the malignity of ignorance, or the hatred of party, all evidence of superior refinement.

In thus rapidly reviewing the leading causes which have concurred to retard the progress of early art in this country, the Reformation has been merely alluded to as turning aside attention to other pursuits. The commonly received opinion which makes this event a primary and permanent source of our inferiority, seems to rest on a very imperfect knowledge of facts. When the glorious doctrines of the Reformation obtained footing in England, no advance had yet been effected in the formation of a native school; the national refinement was in no degree prepared for the successful cultivation of painting; nor do any circumstances particularly favorable induce the belief, that had the Catholic continued to be the established faith, the arts would have improved. On the contrary, though the number of pictures would doubtless have multiplied, these, as in France at the same period, and under circumstances incomparably more felicitous, must have been the works

of foreign artists; consequently, by introducing an artificial manner before any national character of art had been formed, the exoteric taste would, in all probability, have for ever bound up in conventional trammels, the freshness of original conception, and the vigor of national genius. Such we have seen to be the invariable effects of introducing, instead of rearing, art, among every people where the experiment has been attempted. The Reformation, by restoring to the human mind the uncontrolled exercise of its own faculties, by unlocking the barriers by which the will and the powers of free inquiry had been imprisoned, has stamped upon every British institution, as upon every effort of British talent, the worth and the manliness of independent character. Our Fine Arts, though the last to feel, do at length experience this happy influence.

The particular views entertained, or rather taken up without examination, have led, on this subject, to erroneous conceptions, both of the existing condition of art, and of the state of royal patronage. Henry VIII. certainly endeavored by every means to induce the most esteemed painters of the age to visit his court; while the encouragement which he offered was not only continued, but increased with more ample means, after the Reformation had commenced; as far as his influence went, there was a change for the better. But his was neither a cultivated nor a natural taste. The sentiment was merely one of rivalry, stirred up by imitation of his contemporaries, Francis I. and Charles V. His subjects and courtiers, not even animated by such factitious impulse, were, generally speaking, still less qualified to assist in rearing national art. Neither did there exist, in any other form, a previous standard of characteristic originality; a most important consideration, as already shown—for, with the exception of Surrey, no poet of genius capable of giving

to taste an abiding tone of nationality had yet appeared. Under these circumstances, had the importation of foreign art—and it is clear none other could have been encouraged—taken place to any extent; even had Raphael and Titian accepted the invitation of the English monarch, beyond bare possession, their works would have been valueless to the nation; or worse—they would have depressed, by an unapproachable model, the aspirings of native talent, fixing for ever our arts in the mediocrity of imitation.

The opposition, also, which the Reformers are accused of having bent against the practice of painting has been altogether misrepresented. Not only were they not opposed to such acquirements in their proper place, but the assurance is, that they viewed such accomplishments with favor. Among the earliest Reformers, the movers of that emancipation which regenerated a portion, and made despotism more tolerable in the rest, of Europe, were to be found the most accomplished minds and the most elegant scholarship of which the age could boast. Indeed, their superior enlightenment was the human means of that liberty, in which through Christ they had become free. For such men to be the enemies of intelligence, of whatever description, if under proper guidance, and in due subserviency to higher knowledge, was to place obstacles to the spread of their own principles. Hence in Germany and in the Low Countries, the fine arts were admired and patronised by the leading Reformers. Holbein came to England most warmly recommended by Luther, who has already been named as the friend of other contemporary artists. In one respect, the Reformers certainly may be said to have been hostile to art. They proscribed the introduction of pictures into their churches. To this prohibition only, extended the penal statutes of Henry, Edward,



and Elizabeth, about which so much outcry has been raised. No proscription, no interdict against religious paintings merely as such, was agitated, till the period already alluded to as the most truly disastrous to national refinement, when, in 1643, a bigoted parliament ordered, 'that all pictures which had the representation of the Saviour or the Virgin Mary in them should be burned.' The brutal fanaticism, and still more disgusting hypocrisy, of the adherents of Oliver Cromwell, have in this and in similar instances been most unjustly mixed up with the pure spirit and unsullied zeal of the genuine followers of Martin Luther. It is not intended, however, indeed it cannot be denied, that to the mere practice of painting, and to the multiplication of its labours, the exclusion of pictures from the churches is injurious. But extension is not improvement.

So far, then, the Reformation has proved permanently hostile to the art. But highly as we honor the talent of artisanship, and intimately connected as is the glory of the land with the reputation of its arts, we cannot for one moment entertain the proposal now so generally, it had almost been said unblushingly, brought forward, of converting our churches 'into spacious repositories' for the productions of the pencil. Here we have explicitly to state an opinion, though opposed by almost every writer on the arts; first, that neither is the house of God a proper receptacle for pictures; nor, secondly, if every Protestant place of worship were open to such ornaments, is it clear that art would be materially advantaged. Let our sacred edifices be as nobly simple, as massively grand, as may be; let them exhibit every beauty of architecture, if needful; the effect will elevate, without distracting, the mind; or let the solemn representations of sculpture invite remembrance to dwell upon the departed, who sleep

around the living worshipper. Such thoughts prepare the mind for its duties. But pictures do not seem so immediately associated, either with the place or with our meditations; with us, the only association is that of mere ornament. We might, however, be accused of treating here the subject too seriously, were an attempt made to show the sinfulness of abducting even one thought from heaven, to fix it on a merely ornamental appendage. We shall therefore suppose, that in our country, people do not go to church to see pictures, and that, as elsewhere, pictures are here painted to be seen. Now, the time of divine service with us is short, and that space is passed, without intermission, in sacred duties, in prayer, in praise, and in exhortation. Either these momentous engagements or the pictures must be neglected. In the Romish church the service is long, composed of many ceremonies in which the audience take no share, and during which, the mind may be employed in contemplating a religious painting, with at least equal profit as the dressings and undressings, the crossings, genuflexions, perambulations, and incensings, which are being enacted by the officials. In a Protestant assembly, every one is seated in his place; a picture can be viewed properly from a very few points, perhaps only one; granting, then, all the advantages 'of pictures in unison with the feelings of the mind, exemplifying in the most striking manner the objects of its highest admiration and respect,' how limited is the number that could enjoy these? The Catholic church, again, knows not the impediment of pews, and the individuals of the congregation may move and change positions at pleasure. Protestant churches are open only on Sundays, or a few fast days, while we have no useless train of idle retainers to show the curiosities of the place; the Catholic church is open from sunrise to sunset throughout the year, each

with its sacristans, vergers, macemen, &c. in constant attendance. In the Romish ritual, external emblems are certainly permitted as stimulants to inward devotion; of these, pictures are among the most favored. In our faith, the symbols are simple as its practice, and too sacred even to be named here. We have no wish, then, to decry the use or advantage of paintings to the Catholic; but it seems sufficiently obvious, that to the Protestant they can at best be useless in a place of public worship.

In reference to the second consideration, namely, the profit thus accruing to the arts of the country, it has been stated above, that only to the multiplication of paintings has the exclusion in question proved hurtful, and not to the improvement or perfection of the art. In this respect the merits of the Reformation have not only been overlooked, but denied, while the claims of Catholicism, as favorable to elegance, have been too highly exalted. True, a great proportion of the patronage by which the arts have been supported in Italy has been extended by churchmen; this has all been put down to the account of the system. But it is to be remembered, that this protection has been granted more frequently in the character of lay noblemen and princes, than of ecclesiastics. The most splendid works of the pencil are in the private palaces of the popes and cardinals, and other members of the hierarchy; laymen with the same means would have acted similarly. During the infancy of the arts, their feebleness was stayed, and their vigorous manhood nourished, by the free corporations of the republican cities. The Catholic Church only received the arts as orphans, after her temporal, and therefore improper ambition, had destroyed their true and natural parent — Liberty. At this moment, too, very few fine pictures are in churches; they are in public galleries, in private collections, in the cabinets of the curious, and

in palaces. Where, then, is the vaunted superiority in the Catholic profession, or where the ancient and permanent disabilities under which Protestantism has been represented as labouring, in regard to the arts of elegance? And why should we incur even the possibility of contaminating the purity and the spirituality of our faith, or of even offending the mind of the humblest believer, by filling our churches with pictures, when there remains to us the amplest field yet unoccupied? We have, in fact, all that is yet in possession of high art; in our royal palaces, in the almost regal seats of our nobility, in our national galleries, in the halls of our universities and institutions, and in our public buildings of every description. Has not the pencil 'ample verge' and 'room' appropriate?

If these advantages have hitherto remained without fruit, let it be remembered, that the defective returns have not been occasioned by imbecility or idleness — the labourers have been otherwise engaged. During only three centuries of poor and struggling Protestantism, tenfold more extensive and valuable accessions to true knowledge have been realized than were accomplished in the space of a thousand years of the prosperous and uncontrolled empire of Catholicism. That this uprousing of the human spirit has become not less refined than it has been vigorous, is evident from the fact which connects these remarks with our subject, namely, that now, in Protestant Britain, is to be found the only original, and the most flourishing school of painting in Europe.

In pursuing the history of English art posterior to the Restoration, little of importance occurs till the late and present reigns. Charles II. had wit, but no great share of taste, and that little, like his morals, was equally flimsy and meretricious. He trifled with Verrio and Gennaro in decorating ceilings and covering walls; while Lely, whose



light and graceful, but feeble pencil, had in succession traced the melancholy countenance of the Martyr, and the bluff face of the Protector,\* was employed as state portrait-painter on the sleepy and luxurious beauties of the court. During the succeeding reigns, to the accession of George I., lived Kneller, a native of Lubec, an artist of considerable talent, but who painted too expeditiously to paint well, and who was too intent upon sharing the wealth of his own age to leave many drafts that would be honored by posterity, though he painted in his life seven English and three foreign sovereigns. His head of Sir Isaac Newton is worth them all. During the same period we find many native artists of obscure fame and merits; as Dobson, who died in 1646, and was brought into notice through the generosity of Vandyke. Riley, (John), born in the same year, possessed, according to Walpole, more talent than any of his countrymen. It was to this artist that Charles II. said, 'Od's fish, man, if your picture of me be a likeness, I am an ugly fellow.' Hoskins and Cooper, uncle and nephew, were celebrated miniature-painters, especially the latter, who was married to a sister of Pope's mother. Henry, who was employed by King William in the reparation of Raphael's cartoons. Highmore painted the only portrait known of the poet Young. Greenhill and Buckshorn were pupils of Lely. Jervas, who, in spite of art, contrived to make a fortune and to set up a carriage; upon which Kneller remarked, in his broken English, 'Ah, mine Cot! if de horses do not draw better dan he, de journey will never have an end.' The praises lavished by Pope on this his master evince the

\* 'I desire, Mr Lely,' said Cromwell, when sitting to the artist, 'that you will paint my picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts, and every-thing as you see me; otherwise I will never pay you a farthing.'

wretched condition of general taste, when we consider these praises as merely the echo of the public voice. Richardson is best known as a writer on art; though a very inferior artist, he stood at the head of the profession on the death of Kneller. His scholar and son-in-law, Hudson, succeeded in the dignity of metropolitan portrait-painter, though opposed for some time by Liotard, a Genevese, and Vanloo, a Frenchman. Hudson was the master of Reynolds, with whom the British school first assumes the dignity of higher art, the elevation commencing with the portraits painted by Sir Joshua on his return from the Continent in 1752-3. Previously, however, had appeared Hogarth, the most original of all painters; but his pictures, from their subjects, were not calculated, in proportion to their merit, to refine the national taste. So early, too, as 1739, the establishment of the old academy in St Martin's Lane had been silently preparing some melioration in a better manner of designing; and the introduction of costume, though poorly executed, was an advance towards truth from the absurd robes of Lely and Kneller. The association just mentioned was afterwards incorporated by his late Majesty; but the members disagreeing, the Royal Academy was founded. Here have presided the three greatest names in the art since the time of Rubens and Vandyke, perhaps since the Caracci — Reynolds, West, and Lawrence.

Walpole has with justice remarked, that 'in the commencement of the reign of George I., in 1714, the arts of England were sunk almost to their lowest ebb.' The preceding sketch verifies the observation; and from the singular anomaly of a nation, during the most flourishing period of its literature, possessing a taste absolutely contemptible in the fine arts, evinces the truth of the principles advocated throughout these pages. From the Rés-

toration to the accession of George III., the arts had never once been regarded as adding to national respectability, nor as connected with national feeling. The people crowded to have their portraits taken, without inquiring or conceiving that there was anything to know beyond the mere mechanical art. The sovereign, instead of regarding the progress of elegant taste as an important object of legislation, looked out for a limner merely as a necessary appurtenance of a court. As our monarchs of this period, not even excepting Anne, through the predilections of her husband, were, as regards painting, better acquainted with Continental art, and some more attached to everything foreign, British genius, of course overlooked, was never once called forth. Some stray Italian, Dutchman, or German, was caught hold of, patronised by royalty, supported by the nobility, and never thought of by the nation beyond face-painting in the metropolis. From the middle of the seventeenth to the first forty years of the eighteenth century, when national talent at length began to break forth in its own strength, such was the state of patronage, and the artists who enjoyed its benefits were but little qualified to create a national interest; for their mannerism and foreign modes served only the more decidedly to exclude a characteristic style, and, as must ever be the case in similar instances, prevented any developement of native originality. Another great cause of our wretched taste in the arts, and which perhaps, in part grew out of these more general causes, was, that the real genius of the land was bent upon the pursuits of literature and science; while the nation had not attained that degree of refinement, security, and opulence, which enable a people to enjoy and to reward the exertions of mind, as at the present day, in all its separate and diversified departments of action. Between literary eminence and excel-

lence in art there seems a natural connexion, as depending upon principles of taste and modes of exercise nearly similar. Letters and the Fine Arts, then, have generally been carried to the highest perfection among the same people; they have flourished in conjunction, and they have fallen together. It is to be remarked, however, that the former have always preceded; the noblest effusions of poetry have long been the delight of his country before the painter or the sculptor have reached an equal merit. Nor is this casual precedence. The labours of the poet are a necessary, in fact a creative preparation; by their rapid and wide circulation, they soften the sensibilities, arouse the imagination, give to taste an existence and a feeling of its object, and awake the mind to a consciousness of its intellectual wants. They constitute, also, a common chronicle, whether of fiction or of reality, whose events are clear to, and quickly recognisable by all. Fancy thus obtains a lore of its own, whose legends delight by repetition, and whose imagery animates the canvass or the marble with forms loved of old. Poetry, then, must precede art. All this advantage of preparation and expectancy was denied to the infancy of English painting. Milton's verse, not inferior to any precursor of Phidias or of Raphael, instead of being, as Homer's or Dante's, for centuries the manual of his countrymen, was barely known. Dryden, Addison, Pope, were yet but forming the public mind. In many respects, too, even had there not existed artists capable of constituting an epoch, the writings of these distinguished men are not favorable to vigorous originality of thought in art. Their own immediate productions are impressed with the genuine stamp of nationality, but their abstract system of criticism is often timid, almost always conventional; while in every remark on that subject, they show inexperience of the true object



and philosophy of art. Even Addison here writes as a mere antiquarian, and Dryden with all the enthusiasm of poetry indeed, but with little of the sober judgment which must guide the more laborious hand and less undefined shapes of the painter. Again, the intellectual temperament and state of society favorable to the arts is directly opposed to those which promote scientific knowledge. Indeed, between the spirit of analytical inquiry, of minute research, which belongs to the investigations of science, and the creative fancy which tends to the successful exercise of the poet's or painter's art, the dissimilarity appears so great, that among the same people and at the same period, high eminence in both has never yet been attained. The amazing demonstrations of Newton, then, and the profound speculations of Locke, were by no means favorable to painting, while so entirely in infancy. They spread abroad a different taste — they engaged in the pursuit every ardent and aspiring mind. The sublime mysteries unveiled by the genius of Newton gave an especial bias to men's minds, and caused his own age to view with indifference, as light and valueless, pursuits which seemed but to minister to the amenities of life, or to hang only as graceful ornaments upon society.

Having thus faintly traced the rise and progress of painting in connexion with the history of the country, we now proceed briefly to examine the principles and the practice of the British school, under the general heads of Portrait, Historical, and Landscape Painting.

## CHAPTER XIV.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS is the founder of the English school. He is also the author of much that presently forms the most objectionable practice. Like every great artist, Sir Joshua must be viewed in two lights — as he stands in reference to the circumstances of his own age, and as an individual master in his profession. As the immediate successor, then, of the artists already named, and as elevating the art from their inanity to the state in which he left it, he justly ranks among the small number who compose the reformers of taste. In this aspect, his genius exhibits no ordinary claims to the gratitude of posterity, while here his merits are presented in the most favorable light. For when these are considered, on the other hand, as regards the present influence of the principles upon which the reformation, or perhaps commencement, of the English school was established, there will be found defect both in practice and theory. Indeed, the theoretical part of his professional education appears to have been founded, in the first instance, upon the erroneous modes of the writers of the age of Louis XIV., which were never laid aside, though to a certain extent modified by his studies in Italy. In fact, the pictures and the writings of Sir Joshua bear in this respect a striking resemblance — that the beauties of each break forth in despite of theory: Nature and good feeling, operating unrestrained, give to his paintings their best graces, when the ideal perfection at which he aimed has at happy moments been forgotten. In like manner, his discourses are admirable, when they deliver practical precepts, explain the suggestions of experience, or endeavor to reconcile refined taste with common sentiment. But when they speak of

the abstractions and idealities of art, they become, and have already proved, most treacherous guides. This he has himself exemplified, for he has uniformly gone astray where he has implicitly followed these guides; and it may be shown that the besetting sins of the English school spring from the same sources. Sir Joshua's theory and his practice were in more than one respect inconsistent, while neither adhered so closely to, or at least did not render nature, so faithfully and so minutely, as is desirable. His perceptions of form he derived, or professed to derive, from Michael Angelo; but his practice is founded upon the principles of Rembrandt. From the explanation of these already given, with this anticipation, at some length, it must at once appear, that they were little calculated kindly to amalgamate with the decided lines, refined science, and lofty abstractions of the Florentine. But even of these principles, Sir Joshua did not follow the most valuable portion, namely, the rigid fidelity of imitation which they enjoined. He adopted them only in their concentration of light, and deep contrast of shadow, and in their massive coloring, intended for inspection at a certain distance. Instead of careful resemblance, he substituted middle forms, and large masses without details; or, to refer here to his own words, which he has most directly illustrated in his whole practice: — 'the great style in art, and the most perfect imitation of nature, consist in avoiding the details and peculiarities of particular objects;' and again: 'the perfection of portrait painting consists in giving the general idea or character, without individual peculiarities.'

Now, whether these principles be regarded as they affect the practice of an imitative art, and more especially in the department of portraiture; or whether they be examined in reference to the philosophy of taste and compo-

sition in historical painting, we apprehend they will be found not only reprehensible in themselves, but to be the ground work upon which have been reared the present errors of our school. It is for this reason that we shall examine them at some length.

There are two styles or modes of representation in painting, which agree in producing the same general effect of resemblance, but differ in the extent to which the resemblance of individual forms is carried; or perhaps, if the expression be allowed, in the number of particular similitudes composing the aggregate resemblance. It is evident from this definition, that the portion of mental pleasure, or exercise of the imagination, arising from contemplating the productions of an imitative art, merely as such, will be increased just in proportion to the facilities afforded of augmenting comparisons between the prototype and the representation. If this be denied, it follows that the coarsest scene-painting is equal to the most finished landscape of Claude; for the general effect must be alike true in each. But, again, since painting has not, like poetry, the advantage of repeated and progressive impressions; the object which the painter must hold constantly, and as primary, in view, is to add power to the first burst of effect which his work is to produce upon the mind. When, therefore, attention to the individual resemblances has caused to be neglected or overlooked the grand result or aggregate of resemblance, one of the greatest possible errors is committed. The performance is justly condemned to a low grade in art, because the author has both mistaken the real strength of the instrument which he wields, and has shown himself defective in the highest quality of genius, — comprehension and creation of a whole. Thus there are two extremes in art; and even on the adage of common life, the mean must be pre-



ferable. Hence, then, even thus far Sir Joshua's maxim, and the maxim of too large a proportion of our native school generally, appears to be erroneous, 'in avoiding details and individual character.' But in each of these extremes are found its respective, and to excellence, indispensable advantages. The nearer, therefore, they can be approached and reconciled, the more perfect will be the style. If this be doubted, the practice of the best masters will accord with a conclusion derived from the very nature of an art at once imitative and liberal. If we examine in this view the remains of classic sculpture, we find, indeed, the masses and divisions few and simple, in order to preserve the harmony and force of general effect; but so far from details being excluded, the Elgin marbles have the very veins of the horses marked, and are in every respect highly finished; and as we approach the era of Alexander, though this particular circumstance in certain cases be laid aside, yet the general divisions become even more numerous, and the details still more minute. Among the moderns, again, those masters in the art now considered, who are esteemed the most excellent, are singularly remarkable for the quantity and variety of detail which they have harmonized into one grand and perfect whole. For this we refer to the heads of Raphael, Titian, Coreggio, and Vandyke, which, though broad and grand in general effect, are so far from being defective in detail, that each separate part would form a perfect study. If, again, the history of art be considered, it has been shown, both in sculpture and in painting, that during the infancy of each art, details were imitated, while the mind was yet unable to grasp the entire subject. As improvement advanced, and genius attained the full mastery of its weapons, truth and number of constituents, grandeur and unity of design, crowned the whole. Inversely, decline is per-

ceived to commence in the neglect of those fine and almost evanescent details, which compose the breathing, the master-touches of a work of art. Successively the progress of corruption advances, till little remain save large harsh masses, from which state the downward path is rapid, to the complete destitution of even *general* form. How strongly, for instance, and in how short a space, was this exemplified in the fortunes of Greek sculpture in Rome! From the finishing of even Ludovico Caracci, to the sprawlings of Luca Giordano, how brief was the interval! from the exquisitely pencilled and speaking portraits of Vandyke to the glaring vacancies, the undetailed middle forms, of Lely and Kneller!

These reasonings, so varied in their origin, give but one uniform conclusion, the very reverse of the principle upon which English portraits have been painted, with few exceptions, from the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds to those of the present day;—a conclusion, showing that the excellence of art, and the most perfect imitation of nature, do not consist in ‘the avoiding of details,’ but in the happy union of detail and of individual resemblance with greatness and breadth of general power. To avoid details is to rest contented with an inferior aim in art—to avoid, in fact, the chief difficulty and the chief glory that mark the career of the artist.

This gross style of mechanical practice, which the theory now combated certainly originated, has spread over the whole of English portraiture a coarseness of effect and unfinished appearance, destitute of the agreeable lightness of a sketch, and yet without the clear and well-defined solidity of a highly-wrought picture. In like manner, the striving at some delusive, some shadowy excellence of general expression, instead of representing the air and character exactly as in the countenance of the

sitter, has greatly depreciated the intellectual qualities of our art. Hence the unmeaning, common-place look which most of portraits cast at the spectator. Doubtless, in every countenance there is a general impress of thought or feeling, which may be said to constitute the habitual mental likeness of the individual. This it is of the first importance faithfully to transfer to the canvass. Without this, indeed, the most correct and elaborate pronouncing of the separate features is of no comparative value. Hence, however, it by no means follows, that 'individual peculiarities' are to be resigned. On the contrary, when judiciously introduced, they will give force by the very addition of individuality to the general resemblance. It is this which imparts the speaking impress of thought and mind to the portraits of Raphael and Titian, where 'the rapt soul sitting in the eye' seems to breathe, in all its historic energies, from the canvass. It astonishes, indeed, that such precepts should have been delivered by one who must have been sensible, that the reformation which he accomplished in contemporary art, was mainly owing to his having exploded the very same notions of generalizing resemblance, and of middle forms, held by his predecessors. In fact, Reynolds was superior to Lely or Kneller, or even Hudson, chiefly as he approached nearer to nature, by discarding mannered, conventional, and systematic modifications of her realities. And he is superior to himself exactly in those works where he has left out his own peculiar 'ways of seeing nature,' and has given her honestly and faithfully as she actually did appear. Thus his best portraits are those of his intimate friends; — men whose habits of thought and action were pressed upon him by constant observance, and in veneration of whom, and of all that belonged to them, he forgot his system in the subject before him. Such are the portraits of

Dr Johnson, of Baretta, of Goldsmith, of Burney, and two of the finest and most powerful likenesses in the world, of John Hunter and Bishop Newton. As it was with Sir Joshua, so will it be with every other artist. He must not merely imitate, he must resign himself to, nature ; become as a little child, leaving all artifice and false knowledge, and receive from her the precepts of truth and soberness.

These remarks, though now illustrated chiefly by reference to its founder, are applicable more or less to the English school of portraiture generally. Indeed, down to the masters of the present day, these precepts operate, and often not less decidedly than in the works of those who were the contemporaries of Sir Joshua. Of the latter, the names of a few of the principal may now be enumerated.

Romney, who died in 1802, ten years after the death of Sir Joshua, was an original, and to a great degree, self-taught artist. His style of design is simple, his coloring warm and rich, but his affectation of breadth has frequently induced a neglect of form, with often too vague a generalization of sentiment. The great failing of Romney — one common, indeed, to all men, in every profession, who have not been regularly educated — is something defective in his general management, so that the whole is rendered imperfect or displeasing from some peculiarity or immethodical management, which early instruction would easily have enabled him to avoid.

Opie has carried the principles of Sir Joshua to the very verge of coarse and indistinct, from which the force of his own genius has scarcely secured him. His portraits have frequently not more detail than a sketch, yet are usually heavy and laboured in effect. Though undoubtedly possessing high talent, Opie's success was owing not less to the circumstances under which he rose, than



to intrinsic merit. He is, however, a very unequal artist, sometimes attaining great beauty, at others falling beneath himself, which renders it difficult to pronounce generally; besides, he has several manners, though in each, the large and unfinished style predominates. Great allowance is, however, undoubtedly to be made for him, whose first portrait was painted by stealth, in moments snatched from the menial occupation of carrying offals to the house-dog of his first employer. Such was his employment as house-boy in the family of Walcott, the portrait being that of the butcher, and which there is reason to believe was painted in the shambles. No where in the history of mind, do we find such amazing instances of the power of talent over circumstances as in art. From painting likenesses at seven and sixpence in Truro, 'the Cornish boy' came to London with thirty guineas in his pocket, and, with hardly any instructions, save advice from Sir Joshua, made his way to fame and fortune. Next to Sir Joshua, of the contemporary painters, Romney and Opie supported undoubtedly the first rank, though many others, of considerable merit, would deserve notice in a more extended narrative. We shall therefore now direct attention to Historical and Landscape Painting.

The excellence and amazing number of its portraits, has occasioned the merits of the English school of history to appear less than they really are. Indeed, where portraiture is practised on the principles of grand art, as in this country, there must be excellence in all the departments of the profession; and the opinion so prevalent, that portrait is an inferior branch, has seriously prejudiced both divisions of the art. It has withdrawn the historical painter, as, by way of exclusive eminence, he was solicitous to be named, from the careful study of nature in her individual modes and forms — the only true source of ideal

perfection; while it has damped the precious enthusiasm which arises from the consciousness of dignified pursuit, by placing the portrait painter in the degraded rank of a secondary artizan.

The more elevated the standard to which, in any study, the mind is taught to aspire, the nobler will be the fruits of exertion; but where less is expected, less will be accomplished. The portrait painter, feeling that he would not receive credit for beauties of which his art was deemed incapable, has been too ready to take the public at their own word, and to remain contented with the inferiority they were thus willing to accept. But the very reverse of all this is the truth. No essential principle of high art may not be exhibited, and indeed every one is to be found, in a first-rate portrait. Such works, too, are equally, perhaps even more rare, and by the same authors, as the masterpieces of historical composition. Hence we are conducted to our first premise as a conclusion, that where portraiture has been successfully practised, history must also flourish. A reference to the annals of the latter will prove this to be the case among ourselves, at least to a greater extent than is the general impression.

Even from the time of Henry VIII. we find historical painting in repute; some of Holbein's works from history remain even more admirable than his portraits. In the reign of Mary, Antonio More was eminent, though against his inclination employed chiefly in portraiture. Elizabeth, in like manner, patronized Zuccherò; and the portraits of Hilliard, one of the first English artists of merit, are in some instances, though of small size, almost historical, as Donne bears witness:

— Or hand or eye

By Hilliard drawn is worth a history

By a worse painter made:

The labours of Rubens and Vandyke under Charles, especially the Banqueting-House at Whitehall by the former, continue to show that history was not unpatronized. Still no English school can properly be said to have been formed till the eighteenth century, when Sir James Thornhill, in the reign of Queen Anne, was appointed historical painter to the court. The works of this artist are numerous, and we are disposed to rank them higher than they are commonly appreciated. Those in St Paul's and at Greenwich are well known; and though it be questionable whether they could have been much better executed by any other artist at that time in Europe, yet so miserable was the encouragement, that Thornhill is reported to have been paid for some of these labours by the square yard for two pounds.

Thus the annals of historical painting in England furnish little to reward research or to interest the reader, previous to the appearance of Hogarth, born 1698, in the Old Bailey, the son of a schoolmaster, and died in 1764, being the first native artist who proved that there existed subject in our manners, and talent in our land, for other painting than portrait. Hogarth claims the highest praise of genius; he was an original inventor; nay, more, he both struck out a new path, and qualified himself to walk therein. From an engraver of armorial bearings and ornaments on plate, he taught himself to be a painter. The aim of no artist has been more mistaken, at least estimated on principles more opposed, than that of Hogarth. Some have ranked him as a satirical, some as a grotesque painter, while others have not scrupled to rate him merely as a caricaturist. If, however, historical painting consist in the delineation of manners, in the expression of sentiment, and in striking representation of natural character, few names in art will stand higher than Hogarth; while,

beyond most painters, he has extended the bounds of the art, in the alliance which he has formed between the imagination and the heart, — between amusing of the external sense and the profound reflections thus awakened. His pictures are not merely passing scenes, or momentary actions; they are profound moral lessons. It is this which raises him far above the Dutch or Flemish school, with whose general imitation of national customs, his firm and individual grasp of the morality of common life has with great injustice been confounded. From the lofty abstractions of the Italian masters, again, he differs widely, but not, as usually supposed, because he represents low, but because he paints real life. In this respect, the observation of Walpole, that, ‘Hogarth’s place is between the Italians, whom we may consider as epic poets and tragedians; and the Flemish painters, who are as writers of farce, and editors of burlesque nature,’ is founded in utter mistake, or misrepresentation; he never forgave the artist’s independence of his *connoisseurship*. Hogarth’s place is not between, but above and apart. He ‘holds the mirror up to nature,’ not to exhibit graphic powers of mimicry, not to depict the sublimity of mind, or the idealities of form, but ‘to show Vice her own features,’ man ‘his own image.’

His predecessor thus standing alone, Sir Joshua Reynolds claims to be the founder of English historical painting in its recognised acceptation. Indeed, his principles already, or hereafter to be explained, have been followed by all succeeding artists, or have influenced practice in history no less than in portraiture. And what this influence accomplished in the latter, it certainly has also effected in the former department, with this difference indeed, that in the first it created, in the second improved, giving to each a large, bold, and energetic manner, which was



at least a step greatly in advance, a most respectable approximation, in the path of excellence. But this, as a resting-place, was far less perfect in history than in any other branch of the art, since the style was adverse to attainment in many of those qualities justly deemed essential. Hence is Sir Joshua not only inferior to himself in history, but his example has, on the whole, retarded the advancement of the study amongst us. Successors have either too often rested in imitation of his manner, or they have carried his principles forward, in which case they are unfortunately calculated to lead farther from the genuine sources of pure taste and substantial composition.

The masterpieces of Sir Joshua are his representations of children; and in many historical, or rather fancy pieces of this character, as the Infant Hercules, the Strawberry Girl, Puck, Cupid and Psyche, Hope nursing Love, his labours are truly admirable. Such subjects were just fitted to his bland and flowing pencil, while they suffered nothing from undecided form and contours feebly expressed. The arch, yet simple expression, the lovely, yet almost grotesque individuality of character, in the heads of his children, the execution, and even coloring — all is equally natural and exquisite. They are among the most perfect gems of art. Only second to the similar productions of Coreggio, they are superior to everything done on the Continent since the days of Rubens and Fiammingo. It appears singular, then, on the first view of the matter, that Sir Joshua should have so frequently failed, and on the whole left so few good female portraits, while so nearly attaining perfection in subjects of allied grace and loveliness. But it is to be remarked, a style of handling broad and facile, yet peculiarly soft and fleshy, which in these instances produces effects so beautiful without much finish, is not equally adapted to express the equally

soft, yet decided forms and delicate movements of the female countenance. Besides, Sir Joshua had peculiar notions of grace, which affected ease and nature, rather than actually represented the easy and the natural. He wished to avoid stiffness, and has often lapsed into the contrasted and theatrical. His picture of Mrs Siddons, as the Tragic Muse, however, is pronounced by Sir Thomas Lawrence to be 'a work of the highest epic character, and indisputably the finest female portrait in the world.' How far, however, either that, or the no less celebrated picture of Garrick, can rank with historical portraitures, at least considered with those of Raphael and Titian, may justly be questioned. Of the more elevated and serious historical compositions of Sir Joshua, the Death of Cardinal Beaufort is the grandest, the best drawn, and the most powerfully colored; the only defect is the expression, which is too material; Ugolino is a failure, if intended for the fierce inmate of Dante's 'tower of famine;' these want dignity and truth of character. The designs at Oxford are fine; the Nativity, in imitation of the famous *Notte* of Coreggio, is a splendid performance.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, then, owed more to taste and application than to genius; more to incessant practice than to science; he derived all from his predecessors which he has bequeathed to posterity; but if, in making the transmission, he added no new nor essential principle of imitation or invention, he established in high practical excellence the arts of his country.

Among those whose labours in historical painting connect the former with the present school, Barry stands foremost in time as in merit. The performances of this artist exhibit, in a very striking manner, the justice of some of the preceding remarks. They are destitute of the most essential and touching graces of imitative represen-

tation; they want, in short, all that portraiture, which their author affected to despise, could have given — life, nature, truth, and sweetness, without this absence being compensated by any extraordinary beauties of what is termed higher art. The drawing, though often good, is also not seldom defective; while the coloring is uniformly harsh, and the management without force. Imagination and invention run riot without due control of the judgment; not that the fervor of poetic enthusiasm snatches a too daring grace, but rather the unpruned fertility of conception frequently unites the most glaring incongruities. Yet Barry is far from being without power or science; his great deficiencies were a chaste taste and mellowed practice. No man better understood, or has written more learnedly, on the abstract principles of composition; indeed, he has been accused of devoting too much attention to the mere theory and literature of his art, while he neglected Raphael's golden application of Cicero's maxim — '*Nulla dies sine linea.*' There existed, however, in the character of Barry, notwithstanding a rudeness of exterior, and ignorance or disregard of the proprieties of polished life, a moral grandeur of unshaken resolve, of enduring enthusiasm, of stern and uncompromising self-denial, in his professional career, which invest his memory with no common interest. The man who could undertake, alone, and with no certain prospect of remuneration, one of the greatest works which has been attempted within two centuries — and that, too, with only sixteen shillings in his pocket; who, during seven years of struggle, prosecuted that work to a completion, often thus labouring all day, while he sat up the greater part of the night finishing some sketch for the publishers, in order to make provision for the passing hour; — such a man presents claims to admiration of higher dignity than even those of

genius. The great work undertaken and finished amid these difficulties, is the series of six pictures, of the size of life, representing the progress of civilization, in the Hall of the Society of Arts; and it reflects the highest honor on that useful institution, that its gratuitous reward enabled the artist to enjoy his only permanent, though small income, of about £60 yearly. That such a member should have been ejected from the Royal Academy of Great Britain, in which also he held the Chair of Painting, must be considered as a common calamity both to that body and to himself: to him it certainly was, for the degradation embittered the enjoyment, and very seriously impaired the means, of existence. Barry died in 1806, having been born at Cork in 1741; rising from a sailor boy, chalking his rude fancies on the deck of his father's coaster, self-taught, to be the painter now described — the learned writer on his art — the friend of Samuel Johnson and of Edmund Burke.

Many other names of minor reputation might be mentioned, — as Hayman, Mortimer, &c., — who occasionally with portrait, painted history, but to no extent. This branch of the art, except for the labours of the late Sir Benjamin West, at the close of the last century, would almost have been without a representative amongst us. From that period, very great progress in all the departments has been realized. Still, to the ancient grandeur of the historic style this venerable artist has continued to make the nearest approaches. To the New World, succeeding ages will stand indebted for West; but for the painter, the arts are under obligation to England. It is singular, too, that the advice and services of a Scotsman were the immediate inducements which prevented this ornament of two worlds from returning to his native country, in which case his talents would most probably have



been lost to both. The state of patronage and of taste could not have afforded to him the means nor the incitement of rising beyond portrait, in which we do not think West would ever have excelled. Two incidents in his lot reflect equal honor on his native and his adopted country, — like many other moral analogies, evincing the common possession of a congenial liberality and kindness of spirit, which ought, and will, we trust, ever mingle its best affections in reciprocally advantageous and amicable intercourse. In the land of his birth, the opening genius of West was cheered with a truly tender solicitude; his future advance and his future fame seemed less the care of individual friends than of his countrymen. And, from 1763, on first setting foot in Britain, during the long course of his life, he received more encouragement from her sovereign and her people than has ever been accorded to any historical painter, native or foreign; this, too, in the midst of an unhappy, and, as then considered, rebellious contest.

When we consider the labours of Sir Benjamin, in reference either to English or Continental art, they have, in both points of view, a high, but not an equal rank. In the former, they are unrivalled in magnitude, in progressive improvement, and in the excellence of the principles upon which they are composed. In comparing them with foreign art, their merits are not so absolute; but here we shall use the words of the present accomplished president. ‘At an era,’ says Sir Thomas Lawrence, ‘when historical painting was at the lowest ebb, (with the few exceptions which the claims of the beautiful and the eminent permitted to the pencil of Sir Joshua), Mr West, sustained by the munificent patronage of his late Majesty, produced a series of compositions, from sacred and profane history, profoundly studied, and executed with the most facile

power, which not only were superior to any former productions of English art, but, far surpassing contemporary merit on the Continent, were unequalled at any period below the schools of the Caracci.'

In support of this high encomium, Sir Thomas instances 'the Return of Regulus to Carthage,' and 'the Shipwreck of St Paul,' — pictures which amply testify the superiority we have assumed to exist in the living arts of Britain. These, however, are by no means the only master-pieces of West, whose great glory it is to have proceeded on a system which admits of indefinite, and which tends to certain improvement. Even to his eightieth year he was employed in new exercises, not inferior to, or in some respects excelling, the enterprises of his vigorous strength. The cause of his late eminence bears strongly upon the whole tenor of our remarks in treating of Sculpture, and will best be explained in his own words. In 1811, writing to Lord Elgin, the artist thus expresses himself: 'in the last production of my pencil, which I now invite your lordship to see, it has been my ambition, though at a very advanced period of life, to introduce those refinements in art, which are so distinguished in your collection,' — (the Phidian Marbles of the Parthenon.) 'Had I been blest with seeing and studying these emanations of genius at an earlier period of life, the sentiment of their pre-eminence would have animated all my exertions; and more character, and expression, and life, would have pervaded my humble attempts at historical painting.'

It is the soundness and regularity of principle expressed in, or whose existence is clearly deducible from, the entertaining of such views, that constitutes the great merit of the pictures of West. It is these qualities, too, which impart to them their utility and high value as a school of art. As far as they go, they may safely and without re-

serve be recommended to the student. Here he will not be led astray by brilliant though false theory, nor degraded into mannerism by peculiar though striking modes, which can please only from their peculiarity, and when they exhibit the result of native invention. All here is placed upon the broad highway of universal art; all is equable, uniformly correct, firm, and respectable; no compensation of error by an occasional loftiness of flight: the stream of invention sweeps onward calmly and majestically; if not conducting to scenes of the most stupendous sublimity, flowing at least without cataract or whirlpool, through a magnificence which is grand from its very regularity and usefulness. In these works we discover this, perhaps singular character, that in them we detect many wants, but no defects. The composition, grouping and symmetry, are unexceptionable; the drawing is particularly fine, yet without the statue-like design of the French school. But to animate this beautiful framework of art—to inspire these moulds of form and emblems of intelligence with action and sentiment—the touch of that genius, to whose final aims external science furnishes the bare instrument, is wanting. The representation is chaste and beautiful, but it is too clearly a representation; there wants the almost o'er-informing mind, the freshness of natural feeling, which give to art its truest, only mastery over the human spirit.

The surpassing softness and variety of our island scenery seems to have inspired a corresponding beauty and vigorous diversity into our school of Landscape. Rural imagery may almost be said to mingle in every dream of English enjoyment. Hence this department of our arts has always been popular, and, as a necessary consequence of encouragement, has been cultivated with ardor and success. Only, indeed, when English artists have forsaken

English nature, or have attempted to unite classical allegory with heroic landscape, as it is called, have they failed in this delightful branch. From an early period in the eighteenth century, the school may be said to commence, and thenceforward may justly be said to have remained unrivalled by contemporary merit in any other country. One department indeed of landscape, and that too a very charming one, namely water-color, has been, by British artists, not only invented, it may be said, but raised into a most beautiful and useful branch of dignified art. Nor let landscape be deemed, as too frequently, an inferior department: it certainly requires not the highest genius, yet so many qualities must unite in the same individual before he can attain excellence here, that Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, ‘there is more likely to be another Raphael than a second Claude.’ Yet more than one native has approached the eminence of the latter.

Commencing with the last century, the following arrangement will include the most esteemed landscape painters of this country.

*First Class.* Wilson, born 1714, died 1782, the first of English landscape painters; aerial perspective very fine, not surpassed by Claude; great fidelity in representing natural effects; coloring, especially in his later pictures, somewhat dry; objects rather indeterminate. Gainsborough, 1727 — 88; a painter of universal but irregular genius; in his landscapes the most decidedly English of all our great masters. Wright, 1734 — 97; exquisite finishing and wonderful effects of light, especially in his Eruption of Vesuvius, rising and setting sun; touch delicate; coloring fresh and transparent. Morland, 1764 — 1806; it is not easy exactly to class this artist, as his landscapes are generally accessory only to his figures, while these latter are hardly of sufficient interest without such



accessories. Whatever Morland accomplished was rather by the force of genius, than through study or knowledge, with the exception of some of his pictures painted about 1789 — 95. His great excellences lie in the unaffected exhibition of broad and vulgar character, and in the representation of domestic animals, pigs, sheep, donkeys, and worn-out horses; for as he drew merely by force of eye, his ignorance of anatomy prevented him from attempting that 'noble creature' in perfect condition. Moreland's back-grounds and distances are often truly admirable.

*Second Class.* Wootton, died 1765, excellent in field-sports, horses, dogs, and landscape; but his touch and coloring are indistinct. Lambert, 1710 — 1765, chaste and harmonious coloring, with a slight degree of monotony; distances sweet; followed G. Poussin, whose occasional faults in harshness and black shadow he has avoided, though left far behind in sublimity and variety of composition. Barrett, from the sister isle, self-instructed, yet none of our native school has more happily caught the characteristic features of English landscape: his touch, though defective in detail, is rapid, and forcibly distinguishes, at least by their general forms, the different elements of natural composition. Marlow, concerning whom there are no exact dates, and Scott, born in 1710, died in 1772, — both excel in marine views; the latter is scarcely surpassed by the best masters of the Flemish school, and the finishing of the former is particularly happy, though he fails in trees, when attempting inland scenery.

*Third Class.* This division includes many landscape painters of various, some, indeed, of very high merit, whose labours extend from the commencement of the eighteenth to an early part of the present century. Of this class the principal names are the following: Smiths

of Chichester, especially John and George, and Smith of Derby;—it is singular that all three were self-taught. The two Gelpins of Carlisle; the elder by pictures of horses and wild animals, and the Rev. William Gilpin, by his writings and landscapes, have added much to this department. Sandby of Nottingham, a most exquisite landscape daughtsman; as also were Cozens and Hearne, whose paintings have great value in fidelity, and whose drawings contributed not a little towards forming the present school of water-color painting. Tull imitated too closely the Dutch masters. Wheately excelled both in minor history and landscape, especially in rural subjects. Dean, a native of Ireland, some good Italian landscapes. Dayes, Devis, of which names there were three artists more or less connected with landscape. Two Pethers of Chichester; William, both a painter and engraver of landscapes; Abraham excelled in moonlight scenes, exercising the pencil with remarkable sweetness, luxuriance, and transparency of coloring; he died in 1812.

Of all the landscape painters of the British school, Wilson and Gainsborough are undoubtedly the first; nor is it easy to discriminate between them. Wilson excels in splendour of effect and magnificence of composition; but Gainsborough is more natural and pleasing, at least in his early pictures. Latterly he introduced the notion of an ideal beauty in rural nature, which has too frequently been imitated. Both possessed genius in no ordinary degree; but though to the first has been conceded the higher walk as it has been called, because imaginative, to the latter belongs that temperament of mind more essential, we think, to the landscape painter, which powerfully conceives the objects of contemplation, and places them in vivid reality before the eye and the fancy. Each has failed in the grand difficulty of landscape—the proper

introduction of figures; and in the besetting defect of the English school — slovenly execution, and want of detail. Here the remarks are not confined to these artists alone, but express rather the general character. Among the masters of historical painting, as Titian, Caracci, N. Poussin, Rubens, who excelled in landscape incidentally, as it were, the scene is always subordinate to the figures. This is generally the case, too, with those who more directly professed historical or heroic landscape, as Salvator Rosa, Albano, Francesco Bolonese, with many of the most celebrated Flemish and Dutch artists. In this case the landscape is introduced either to exhibit some scenic propriety, or as a mere embellishment of the historical design. The great difficulty here lies in maintaining subordination and unity, yet preserving the interest, of the respective parts of the composition. In these beauties Claude completely fails, as do also Wilson, and most English artists who have made the attempt. The landscape overwhelms the story, while the story generally discredits the landscape; or, the attention being equally divided between both, the interest of each is weakened. This is sometimes the case with Gainsborough, often with Morland, and still more frequently in the Dutch school. In landscape painting, properly considered, the figures should always be subordinate, forming merely a part of, and corresponding with, the scene; most especially when that scene is from nature, and with her beauties ever fresh renewed, inexhaustible — there is something almost unhallowed in thrusting upon us the inferior, and mannered and crowded compositions of mere imagination. Nor is it a matter merely of taste; everything which has a tendency to lead the mind and the imagination of the artist away from nature, tends also to the deterioration of art. Hence the absurdities so visible in the history of this par-

ticular branch — Nature represented as if seen through a Claude-Lorraine-glass — skies gleaming and glaring under the appellations of sunrises and sunsets, — buildings of fantastic form and uninhabitable dimensions, under the name of Italian ruins — foliage and fields in every variety of tint, save the soft, quiet, unobtrusive hues of leaves and herbage. Surely of all painters, the British landscape painter is least excusable in deviating from the reality around him, which presents every element of his art in its best perfection, from the softest beauty in a freshness of dewy verdure elsewhere unknown, to the wildest sublimity of lake, mountain, wood, and torrent! Even in the gorgeous magnificence of our changing sky, there is a gloriousness, and grandeur of effect, which we have never seen even in Italy. If, again, he seek for objects of moral interest, there is the feudal fortalice — the cloistered abbey — the storied minster — the gothic castle, with all their rich associations; — there the mouldering monument — the fields of conflict, the scenes of tradition, of poetry, and of love — and, far amid the wild upland, gleams the mossy stone, and bends the solitary ash, over the martyr of his faith. For such as these the imagination can give us no equivalents.

Coarse and undetailed, though talented, execution, has overspread every department of the British school. In the present branch, however, this manner seems especially misplaced. A landscape painting, more than any other, is viewed merely as a work of art. Consequently, the mind feels dissatisfied in the absence of those qualities of finished execution and delicate management, which constitute the essential value and character of art as such. The imitation requires not only to be general; but, to give entire pleasure, we must be enabled also to trace with ease minute and varied resemblances. The work thus



affords almost the endless gratification of nature's own productions. But we shall not rest the objections to loose practice on grounds that might be disputed as a matter of dubious taste. The evil is not stayed in the effect, but endangers the very existence of its own rapid creations. Where the study is general effect only, the next object must necessarily be to produce that effect speedily: indeed, such a style completely excludes the care requisite to proper elaboration and transparent coloring. Hence tints are used, which soonest attain to the general end in view; but such tints are exactly those which fade the soonest. Hence the blackness, rawness, and want of harmony, in so many English landscapes. Hence, also, the clear and silvery tones which seem indestructible in the exquisitely finished landscapes of Claude, and the most eminent foreign artists. Generally, indeed, the best masters in this branch are decidedly those who have finished with due care. Of the works of our own school, those are also the most excellent as essays of genius, which are the most judiciously laboured as performances of art.

We may now turn our attention for a little to the past state of painting in Scotland. During the eighteenth century, though there can hardly be said to have existed any separate style, so as to merit the distinction of a school apart from that of the empire generally, yet several very respectable Scottish artists are found to have practised both in London and Edinburgh. In the latter capital, towards the close of that period, a school gradually arose, which, considering the resources of the country, the opportunities of improvement, the means of patronage, and latterly, the merits of its individual masters, especially of its head, the late Sir Henry Raeburn, displays an inferiority certainly not greater than might reasonably be expected. Or we will go farther;

when the invigorating influence of royal countenance and protection upon the fine arts, the superior wealth and intelligence congregated in the seat of legislature, are viewed — all concurring to foster and advance art in the capital; and when, on the other hand, we reflect, not merely on the absence of these advantages, but on the positive detriment of a non-resident nobility, whose presence might in some measure supply other deficiencies, it must be matter of astonishment, not that Scottish painting is inferior, but that it is so nearly equal, to that of London. But there needs not an appeal merely to relative excellence; the absolute merits of some of the masters now in Edinburgh, or belonging to Scotland, are not surpassed in their respective departments. It is far from the intention, in these remarks, to institute any invidious distinctions, but to state fairly the claims of Edinburgh, and that the talents of her artists, and the zeal of her people, place her, not among the secondary cities, but among the capitals of Europe. It ought also to be remembered, that in no instance are the arts of any kingdom more indebted, than those of the British Empire to Scotsmen. Not to mention the exertions of Gavin Hamilton, himself an artist, whose discoveries and knowledge of antique art materially assisted the general restoration of taste — and we do know that, in this light, Canova both regarded and ever spoke of him with gratitude — there are two cases more immediate to the present purpose. Sir William Hamilton, at his own risk and expense, though afterwards, as was only proper, in part repaid, made the most splendid collection of ancient vases now in the world, excepting that of Naples. These are in the British Museum, and have not merely refined taste, but have most materially improved the useful arts of the country. The Earl of Elgin's inestimable

treasures of ancient sculpture have enriched Britain with examples of unrivalled excellence, and which have already mainly contributed to the present superiority of her genius in art. These precious remains, with indefatigable assiduity, at a ruinous and hopeless expenditure, collected — an enterprise in which kings had formerly failed — he gave to his country on repayment of not nearly his own outlay, though we have reason to know, through the late venerable Denon, that the former government of France offered to the possessor his own terms. The meritorious act of removal indeed has, with school-boy enthusiasm, and maudlin sentimentality, been deplored as a despoiling of a classic monument. How utterly absurd is this, to lament that the time-honored labours of ancient Greece did not sink for ever beneath the violence of the despot and the ignorance of the slave, instead of being, as now, in the midst of an admiring and enlightened people, shedding abroad their beauty and their intelligence, again to revive in our living arts!

Jamieson, the first of whom there is interesting notice, and one of the most accomplished of the Scottish artists, died in Edinburgh 1644. His labours, with those of the succeeding century, are connected by works and names, as Norrie, elder and younger, now fast hastening, or already, with no injustice, consigned, to oblivion. The times, agitated as they were by political and religious dissensions, offered little encouragement to the arts of elegance and peace. Throughout the early part of the eighteenth century, however, to the era even of Sir Joshua Reynolds, individual artists, natives of Scotland, may be mentioned, of attainments and practice superior to any in the history of painting during the same period in England. The cause of this is evident in the more accomplished professional education which the former

received. The intercourse between Scotland and Italy, owing to various political causes, and to the great number of Scotch residents in the latter country, was then very close; hence, after attaining all that home instruction could give, hardly a single Scottish artist of eminence can be mentioned, who had not, by an abode in Italy, finished his studies where alone the highest and truest knowledge can be obtained. It would be needless to combat the opinion, that such a process is unnecessary. No artist, with a mind open to the real beauties of his profession, can visit Italy without reaping the most solid advantages, otherwise unattainable. In this respect, too, the Scottish artist seemed to enjoy a security in the very poverty of native art; for if he saw little to excite ambition, enough remained to direct study, without taste being influenced by the popularity of false modes. Hence it is not more than justice to state, that in the works of the following names, there is to be found a more uniformly pure and dignified style, if not of higher excellence, than generally distinguishes contemporary art.

Ramsay, son of the poet, inherited no small portion of his father's love of nature, and power of unaffected delineation of her simplicity. His portraits present, in these respects, a charm quite refreshing, when compared with the staring mannerism of the Anglo-German school, founded by Lely and Kneller. Ramsay remained three years in Italy, from 1736. Of his accomplishments, Dr Johnson has left this testimony: 'you will not find a man in whose conversation there is more instruction, more information, and more elegance, than in Ramsay's.' Runciman, an excellent draughtsman and pleasing colorist, born in 1736. Several historical paintings, executed at Rome and in Edinburgh, evince very considerable powers both of composition and practice. He was for a



length of time a very efficient teacher in the Scottish Academy of design. More, the Scottish Claude, as he is sometimes termed, whom also he selected as his model. Without, however, reaching the depth of coloring and beautiful nature which are found in that admirable painter, there are many stations which may be filled with honor. In one of these More is to be placed, while his figures have very great propriety both of selection and in the manner of introducing them. His subjects are usually Italian scenes, in the neighborhood of Rome, where he chiefly resided, and died in 1795. To these, other names of considerable merit might be added, as Cochrane, Sir George Chalmers; Barker, too, the inventor of panoramic painting, was, we believe, a native of Scotland, at least, the first work of the kind ever exhibited was in Edinburgh. Martin, who visited Italy in company with Ramsay, practised portrait painting with considerable reputation, till he retired from his professional labours on the increasing and merited popularity of his distinguished contemporary, under whom the Scottish school assumes a dignified importance, heretofore denied to its comparatively isolated endeavors.

Sir Henry Raeburn, the representative of painting in Scotland from 1787 to his death 1823, was born in a suburb of the capital, 1756. Of all the distinguished artists who have attained excellence, without any peculiarity of manner, perhaps Raeburn owes least to others and most to himself in the acquisition of his art. Originally apprenticed to a goldsmith, it does not appear that he ever received a single lesson from a master even in the ordinary accomplishments of drawing. From painting miniatures with success during his apprenticeship, he turned his attention to large portraiture in oil, with no other assistance than merely copying a few portraits could

give. Even these early productions must have possessed merit, since they obtained the approbation of Sir Joshua, by whose advice he visited Italy, remaining abroad two years, thus completing the round of his professional studies.

The character of Sir Henry's art participates strongly in that which has prevailed in British portraiture during the last fifty years. It in fact presents the very ideal of that style whose aim is to speak most powerfully to the imagination, through the slenderest means addressed to the eye. His pictures afford the finest, we might say the most wonderful examples, how far detail may be sacrificed, and yet general effect and striking resemblance be retained. In this respect he has carried the principles of Sir Joshua to the very verge of indistinctness; but what is given has such vigorous meaning, that in the power of the leading forms, the fancy discovers an intelligence, which, overspreading the whole composition, and bursting from each master line, guides the mind triumphantly over the blank masses often composing the interior. If, then, to produce strong effect, by whatsoever means, be the object of art, Raeburn has succeeded beyond most painters; but if true excellence consist in blending into one harmonious whole the delicate markings and grand contours of nature, he has failed; if pictures are to be viewed only on the walls of a gallery, at a distance from the spectator, his portraits correspond with this arrangement; but if the eye loves to rest upon features dear to the affections, or prized by the understanding — if delight to trace the shades of feeling and the lines of thought — if these wishes can be gratified, and are indulged in the masterpieces of art, then does Raeburn, and not only he, but the great majority of the English school, rest far behind. The error, in his individual instance, as in most others,

lies in the system. To this, also, which recognizes mere effect and general resemblance as all, is to be ascribed his frequent disregard of correct outline, his black and square shadows, and coarseness of coloring. Yet Raeburn saw nature with the eye of true genius, for he caught her essential forms, and often her most effective graces ; but either his industry disdained, or his art was unable, to add the rest.

The leading events and principal masters in the past history of British art have now been rapidly surveyed. Upon the living ornaments of the school, individually, it scarcely falls under the province of the annalist, nor is it his intention, to dwell. It is not, that matter of still farther congratulation would not thus be afforded in the evidence of national progress ; for at no time has the English school occupied a more elevated position, whether compared with others, or with itself. But, estimated thus highly and thus truly, the general eminence has still gradations, which, in entering upon detail, it would be incumbent to point out. The responsibility of this duty it is the wish to avoid. An opinion ventured upon works left by their authors to the guardianship of posterity, may be canvassed in its truth or falsehood as an abstract criticism, without either wounding the feelings of the living, or, it may be, injuring the value of professional labour. From judicious observations when called for, an artist has to fear nothing, and may profit much ; but it should ever be remembered, that the professional merit must be humble indeed, which does not render the possessor superior to his self-constituted judge, who is himself not an artist. A sound judgment in literature, or an acquaintance with the general principles upon which all works of taste must necessarily be conducted, are not sufficient, without practical skill, truly to estimate a production of art. The poet employs

vehicles of thought and signs of expression familiar to all as the use of reason; the means and instruments of the painter constitute in their management a peculiar science, in which excellence or defect is less appreciable by natural or untrained observation. Neglect of these principles of criticism has exposed to groundless censure, and to as injurious praise, both arts and artists.

When it is stated, that the modern English school surpasses every other in Europe, the inference is not to be assumed, that painting elsewhere has retrograded, but that, with us, art has advanced beyond the general improvement. During the present century, painting in France has been superior to any thing produced in that country since the age of Louis XIV., or, perhaps, it has in this space attained a greater glory. Italy has more than one master, who, in purity of style at least, excels any predecessor within the last fifty years. Now, if the representatives of these respective schools be compared, or if the universal works of each be taken as the criterion of merit, in either case it would not be difficult to show, that separately, or as a school, the British artists of the present age have made the greatest attainments towards excellence.

But compared with ourselves, has our course also been progressive? The affirmative here it is more difficult to prove. Reynolds, Hogarth, Wilson, Gainsborough, all contemporaries, certainly present a rare combination of genius and art. But besides these stars of the first magnitude, every other 'lesser light' twinkles with diminished ray. Now, as respects the general diffusion of most respectable eminence, this is far from being the case at present. In every branch, more than one master of high talent might be mentioned. Again, considering the representatives of each department in the present and in the



former age, there can be no hesitation, everything considered, in giving the preference to our contemporaries. A remark of the late learned Fuseli is here quite to the purpose, while in itself perfectly correct: 'The works of Sir Joshua Reynolds are unequal, many of them are indifferent, though some cannot be surpassed; but, on the other hand, even the most inferior picture from the pencil of Sir Thomas Lawrence is excellent.' It is this extended and uniform excellence, as has appeared throughout the whole course of these investigations, which constitutes not only individual superiority, but which tends, most directly and most surely, to the exaltation of art.

Hogarth, again, stands alone rather in the peculiar dramatic character of his performances, than in their beauty or science, as bearing upon the promotion of universal improvement, or even as individual pieces of painting. His pictures, also, with few exceptions, are rather isolated representations than general exhibitions of manners; they are scenes displaying the singularities, more than the leading actions and feelings of life. Their effect is broad and true, and the moral powerful; but both are circumscribed by times, and by partial divisions among mankind. Wilkie, whose style of composition most nearly resembles Hogarth's, and with whom, therefore, he is to be compared, while he preserves all the force of individual character and delineation of living nature, has extended a far more comprehensive grasp of mind over the moralities of his subject. He has brought within the pencil's magic sway, and fixed there in permanent reality, the sorrows and the joys, the hopes, fears, and attachments, the occupations, customs, habits, and even amusements, of a whole unchanging class of mankind. This may appear to have been before accomplished, both in the English and Flemish schools. But here lies the distinction: Hogarth rep-

resents general ideas by particular signs. His forms and his expressions are individual modifications of the limited society to which they belong. The conceptions of Wilkie are the idealisms of his models. Each figure is not only pregnant with individuality of character and life, but is the true representative of the class whose constituent it is. Each expression, though generally but the index of humble feeling, sends abroad into the heart of every spectator its artless appeal. He has thus, in fact, applied the generalizations of higher art to the interests of common life, yet preserving its simplicity, its humbleness, and reality. The Dutch painters, again, have painted vulgar instead of common nature; nor, in the complete range of their school, is there once an example of that delightful sentiment, which our countryman has so successfully cast over his most lowly scenes, and by which he has redeemed them from every approach to vulgarity, without falling, as Gainsborough has sometimes done, into insipidity or mannerism.

In landscape, Turner has extended the boundaries of his art by the invention of prismatic colors, and by his novel applications of them. He is therefore decidedly a more original artist than Wilson, whose best works are those composed in imitation of Claude. But Turner by no means stands so much alone as did the masters of the former age; names in both divisions of Britain might be mentioned his equals in more than one respect. In the historical department, again, if we admit the late President's works, there can be no comparison between these and any former labours of the English school. But in all the possible varieties of historical composition, there are artists of great excellence either now living, or who have been taken from us within these few years; as Haydn, Martin, Allan of Edinburgh, Heapy, Collings, Fuseli,

Harlow, Stothard, Cooper, Landseer, with others. In portraiture, Jackson, Phillips, and others, show, that even high excellence is not so confined as in the time of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Lawrence is indeed the first artist in Europe, but he is ably supported. A little anecdote may here give some idea of the powers of Sir Thomas's pencil. On visiting, one evening, the apartment in the Vatican where his splendid portrait of George IV., in coronation robes, was then exhibited, we were much struck with the fixed attention immediately directed to it by an individual who had just entered. A deeper interest was excited on perceiving the stranger to be a celebrated native artist. Continuing for some time in total abstraction, during which the workings of his countenance clearly indicated admiration or astonishment, and, we thought, disappointment, with a sudden unconscious gesticulation, he exclaimed aloud, 'Dio — il tramontane!' as if saying 'Heavens! can that have been painted beyond the Alps!' and abruptly hurried away.

From the preceding remarks, and the names now enumerated, who are mentioned without any reference to comparative rank or merit as to each other, two inferences are deducible: first, That the masters more immediately in the public eye, as now at the head of the various departments of art, are on the whole superior to those of the last age; and, secondly, That between the former and their present contemporaries, the interval is small in comparison with the position occupied by Reynolds, Hogarth, Wilson, or Gainsborough, in relation to the school over which they presided. Hence the general conclusion seems evident, that in Britain, the art, as compared with itself, has continued to improve.

Compared with foreign art, the distinctive character of the English school is strongly marked. Painting on the

Continent exhibits a striking uniformity of style, with such peculiarities as, on a general view, will not lessen the truth of a common classification. The Continental artist, then, studies to detail, but fails in power of general effect; his performances are more valuable as works of art and of imitation, than of imagination or abstract resemblance. The parts are beautifully made out, finely drawn; but the whole is too seldom connected by any animating principle of general similitude, uniting the separate elaborations into one broad and forcible harmony. Hence the dry, the meagre, and the disjointed particulars, the usual components of their labours, though in themselves truer than the constituents of British art — better drawn, it may be, and more carefully finished, as they almost always are, yet contrast disadvantageously with the bold and powerful, though large generalizations of our pencil. Nor can there be impartial question, though each be separately defective, that more genius is displayed in the latter than in the former. The English artist paints more to the mind; the French and the Italian to the eye. The first looks abroad upon the universal harmonies and oppositions of nature; the second scrutinizes and carefully renders the filling up of her aggregated forms, and the lesser concurrences of her general effects. Art, with us, represents objects as they seem in their relations, rather than as they actually exist; among our rivals, it delineates things as they are in themselves, to the neglect of those modifications by which reality is diversified through pleasing falsehood, especially as viewed in reference to a medium of expression; founded itself in delusion. In the one case, nature is seen and imitated as a picture; in the other, her operations and forms are contemplated as materials out of which pictures are to be wrought. Hence English art satisfies, but deceives; the foreign style does not deceive, but fails to satisfy.



Compared with itself, and with the real objects and essence of art, we have already pointed out the great defect in the practice of English art to be, imperfection in the details. In portraiture, this has spread to a ruinous extent; and with the most beautiful models in the world, British female portraits, speaking in general, are most decided failures. On this subject, nothing more remains to be said — we refer to the exquisite works of Lawrence, whose female heads are at once most striking, most lovely, and very highly finished; — we recommend a study of Vandyke's likenesses of the ladies of the Court of Charles, now in the Louvre. Let the natural grace and modesty, the delicacy of feature and transparency of tint, in these, be compared with similar works of the present day and practice — when it must at once appear how much is lost to art, and how great injustice is done to nature. In male portraits our practice is better, but only from the bolder lineaments of the subject. The inherent errors are the same — modelling with the pencil, rather than drawing — immense masses of dark shade to conceal the absence of all that should be present — and forcible rather than natural effect. There certainly now appears, however, in the productions of the most esteemed living masters, the progress of a more scientific and more perfect style.

In the walk of history, expression — that expression which comes from the natural outpourings of feeling — which animates the canvass of the early masters — and which seems to find its proper, spontaneous, accordant instrument in their pencil, — has yet been wanting. Next, our historical paintings are sadly defective in composition — not in the symmetrical arrangement and grouping of figures, but in the real poetry of the art, in the facile, the creative power over the means and materials of the science — in the skill of causing them to fall as if by chance,

and without effort or visible design, into the most harmonious, most striking, and most effective combinations.

Another and a principal source of inferiority — of absolute, yet laborious error, has been the most mistaken perceptions of ideal beauty in art. This subject it was our intention to have treated here at some length. Our limits, however, forbid, while it is of less consequence, since the volume contains within itself the leading precepts on this topic. The sum of these separate remarks is, that the ideal is not beauty apart from, but wrought out of nature. So far from being the creation of fancy, it lives, breathes, and is to be found only in nature. In this important principle, juster ideas are beginning rapidly to diffuse their influence over the whole of our art, since theory has been laid aside, and nature, and the antique, and real taste have regained the ascendancy.

# THE FINE ARTS.

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## ARCHITECTURE.

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### CHAPTER XV.

ARCHITECTURE has been termed the Art of Necessity, in contradistinction to Sculpture and Painting, which have been distinguished as the offspring of elegance and luxury. To the first, the remark of the ancient poet has been deemed most peculiarly applicable,

*‘ Hinc variæ veniſſe artes — labor omnia vicit  
Improbis, et duris urgens in rebus egestas.’*

If there be, however, distinction in the first origin, it ceases long before any of these can become the object of refined or useful inquiry. The principles of all, considered in the rank of arts, originate in the mind, though a sentiment of intelligent curiosity, or a sense of corporeal weakness, and the desire of protection, first give visible action to the latent germs of feeling and of ingenuity. Here, then, appears the accidental, not distinctive character, in the originating impulse, and in the species of imitative design thence resulting, which is afterwards to call

forth the most refined evidence of human thought and genius. Man's first care would evidently be directed to the discovery or construction of means of shelter against the inclemencies of the sky under which his lot was cast. His best affections, no less than his natural wants, would prompt him to this. But the cave of the Troglodyte, or the hut of the savage, are not more connected with science and forethought, than is the den of the tiger, or the lair of the wolf, or the still more artful structure of the fowl. For no sooner is the human creature thus established, his physical desires stilled, not gratified, than begin the ceaseless aspirings of the spirit within; the workings of that wondrous maze of understanding and of feeling, of thought and volition, which so mysteriously bind, and so irresistibly direct him to his higher and better destinies. Thence, and only thence, springs, as a bright and pure emanation, though darkened for a while in struggling through an imperfect medium, every effort thereafter to instruct or to adorn a happier world.

In conformity with these views, it has appeared, that the first attempts at sculptural or pictorial representation were dedicated to piety, and to the social affections of the heart. In like manner, the earliest and rudest erections of architecture now existing, as well as the most perfect and magnificent, are temples to the Deity, or memorials of the dead. There is, in these respects, indeed, a striking proof of the existence of this law of mind, — not of mere instinct, and, at the same time, of self-denial, in favor of the generous and the holy in man's nature. Not only do we find, that, wherever the human foot has been stayed, there is the altar, the temple, and the tomb; but we meet these amid the destitution of every approach to that luxury to which the arts have been ascribed; and, finally, we discover a vast disproportion between the efforts dedicated



to these tributes of gratitude and affection, and those directed to personal comfort or splendor. Jacob, while yet a wanderer in tents, consecrated, by a pillar,—the first monument on record,—the spot where reposed his beloved Rachael. Over the whole of the inhabited globe, not excepting the dark heaths of our native land, are the last resting-places of the dead, which must have required a union of care and labour given only to a duty, everywhere held inviolably sacred. Even in the wilds of the New World, there are sepulchres of like laborious structure, to which, with a steadiness surer than that of the needle, the distant tribe tracks its way through pathless woods. Compare, again, the evidence of congregated energy, and even science, in the Druidical temples only, with the glimpses we possess of the accommodations of common life. The religious edifices of Egypt even yet fill the mind with admiration; while the probable monuments of their dead, faithless, indeed, to their individual trust, shall only sink amid the ruins of the world, enduring testimonies of the power of religion and of futurity over the mind of man, and of the vain attempt to convert that power into an instrument of selfish aggrandisement. From all this, something better may be deduced than even refuting the idea, that the sublimest objects of taste indicate, in their origin, a grovelling necessity, and, in their progress, owe their most graceful improvements to an idle luxury. In this inseparable union of the primitive arts of taste with feelings of religious service and of human affection, we perceive that man, even in a state of natural darkness, is not the selfish, the irreligious being, represented by a cold and material philosophy, equally the enemy of taste as of religion.

Beyond these remarks it is not here necessary to trace the first origin of Architecture. In this art are certainly

to be detected the very links of connexion, joining the knowledge of the descendants of Adam with that of the families of Noah. We learn from Scripture, that soon after the Flood, while yet the remembrance of that catastrophe was fresh in the mind, the building of a city and a tower was commenced. Such design could not have been entertained without some previous model, or, at least, assurance that it might be accomplished. Such model or such assurance could be derived only from antediluvian experience or tradition; for it is in the highest degree improbable that either could have originated, or been brought to such maturity, in so short a space as intervenes between the descent of Noah from the Ark, and the gigantic undertaking of his posterity. Again, the materials were artificial; and of such perfection, well-burnt brick, as we do not find mankind to have used in the same countries many centuries afterwards. The construction, too, of that mysterious relic of two worlds, which ‘floated on the waters of the abyss,’ is a proof of high advance in the arts of the first. Subsequently, all researches are at fault. From this state of intelligence and union, mankind suddenly sink into the most wretched ignorance, and disperse in wild confusion. A cause, such as the one in Sacred Writ, could alone produce this effect. Broken fragments and glimmerings of ancient knowledge, no doubt, remained with the scattered tribes of the human family. But to trace usefully the extent, reunion, and improvement of these imperfect elements, would be here a vain task. The few valuable and only authentic memorials of the very early ages are to be found in Scripture, which ascribes the origin of monuments that may be termed architectural, to ratify contracts, — to mark the place of the dead, — to indicate some remarkable event — to the altar of stone; also, it contains the descriptions of

regular buildings of a later period, which have now passed away, as the walled cities which the Israelites found in Canaan; their own early labours,—the Temple of Solomon, the Palace of Lebanon, the ‘House of Dagon,’ and other heathen temples incidentally mentioned in Scripture, to which reference is made. All these erections and notices are confined to that part of Asia which extends from the Black Sea to the mouth of the Euphrates, and from the Mediterranean to the extremities of Persia. Over the once magnificent architecture of the whole of this extensive tract, including the seats of the most powerful and ancient monarchies of Asia,—the Assyrian, Median, Babylonian, and Persian,—except what can be gathered from scattered heaps of brick, utter forgetfulness reigns. Later information is supplied by Herodotus and the Greek writers; but, except the comparatively recent remains at Persepolis, Baalbec, and Palmyra, already noticed, nothing exists that can throw light upon our subject. A very different aspect, however, is presented in Egypt and in India, where monuments of the most remote antiquity remain, interesting in themselves, and as they tend to illustrate the progress and the revolutions of Architecture in its more modern forms. From an examination of the former, we shall be enabled to discover the germs of the more perfect Greek modes, while, in the combinations of Arabian with Indian forms, we seem to detect the rudiments of that singular style, which, under the various appellations of Arabic, Saracenic, Gothic, has extended over the whole of Europe, and a considerable portion of Asia. Thus, one of the first and one of the last departments of the present subject, one of its purest and one of its most complicated systems, originates probably in countries now to be considered, and whose monuments are coeval with the first reunion of intelligence and society

among men. But, before entering upon the inquiry which is to trace this connexion through the history of the art, it becomes necessary to explain certain common and preliminary principles.

There are three grand causes of structure and form in Architecture, — three leading principles, which not only originated the primeval elements of design, but which, to a great degree, have governed all the subsequent combinations of these. This influence also extends not merely to the essentials of stability, equilibrium, and strength, but, as will afterwards appear, has suggested the system of ornament. These master dispositions, which it thus becomes necessary to bear along with the commencement, are, first, *the purpose* — secondly, *the material* of Architecture — and thirdly, *the climate*.

The purpose for which any building was erected, or the uses which it was contemplated to serve, would necessarily determine the magnitude, and to a certain extent, the form. Again, these considerations would suggest the most appropriate means of accomplishing the requisite ends, which, once accomplished, would constitute permanent distinctions.

The materials, again, employed in architecture, have influenced most decidedly its forms and character. This has been the case, not only in the peculiar styles which have separately been adopted in different countries, but in the general and essential principles of the science. The materials of which buildings, in all ages, have been chiefly constructed, are stone, wood, and factitious substances, as tiles and bricks. The first adopting of these materials, and, of course, the style of building, must have been recommended by the resources of the country. The law, however, which determines their arrangement is universal, arising from exigencies over which taste, and even inge-



nulty, exert limited control. This evidently arises from the nature of the question ; for, since a mass of stone is heavier in all, and weaker in most positions, than timber of equal dimensions, the whole congeries of supporting and supported members—that is, the whole system of architecture will be affected as the one or the other material is employed. Thus, in wooden erections, the supporting members may be much fewer and less massive than in structures of stone ; because, in the former, the horizontal or supported parts are both lighter, and will carry an incumbent weight—as a roof—over a much wider interval than in the latter. It is apparent, also, even for the ordinary purposes of stability, that, in constructing edifices of stone, whether of the perpendicular or horizontal members, the dimensions would be greater than in elevations of wood ; and in the case of columnar structures, that the altitude, in proportion to the diameter, would be far less in stone than in timber supports. Hence, the two grand characteristics of a massive or solemn, and a light or airy, architecture. Hence, also, when genius and taste had begun to consider the arrangements of necessity and use in the relations of effect and beauty, new combinations would be attempted, which approached to one or other of these leading divisions. It must, however, be obvious, that the field of these experiments is narrowed by the very principles on which they would be first suggested. In the art we are now considering, the human agent has less power over the inertness of matter than in any other. Imagination comes in contact with reality at every step, and the laws of nature impress the boundaries of that reality, not at the risk of absurdity, but of very being. Beauty becomes here, not the creation of fantasy—a something pleasing only as it reflects our associations, or harmonizes with our feelings ; but is more especially

the creation of science — the object of demonstrative wisdom. Hence, perfect architectural beauty is the most sublime and the most rational of the objects of taste; because, while the susceptibilities of mind are awakened, the powers of judgment are gratified, by the certainty with which the sources of pleasure can be traced. We feel the arrangement to be beautiful; we know that it is necessary. Hence, also, the perfect modes — the true combinations of the art — are few; the error in departing from them great.

These refined perceptions do not indeed pertain to the period now contemplated; but the facility with which they can be connected with the first practice of the art, evinces how deeply rooted are the real and substantial precepts of architectural design. The leading views, also, in regard to the influence of material upon form, proportion, and distribution of parts, are supported by early history.

In Egypt, a country destitute of wood, the most ancient erections were in imitation of the natural caves in which the rude inhabitants had sought a wretched shelter. In a later age, yet one which far transcends the authentic researches of history, were reared those mysterious edifices, still standing as landmarks between known and unknown time. In the ponderous members of these solemn piles, the narrowness of the intervals, the crowded pillars, the massive base, and the lessened perpendicular, is found every principle previously assumed as characteristic of that architecture, which would be governed by necessity before the sensation of beauty had been felt, or at least methodized. Here, also, appears the first species of architectural design. Again, in that region of Asia, already noticed as the scene of the earliest recorded labours of the art, wood was abundant. From the descriptions of Holy

Writ we accordingly find, that this material was much employed even in their most sacred and important buildings. Thus, though few details capable of giving any just architectural notions, are preserved of Solomon's Temple, it is yet plain, that cedar wood was the chief material both for roofs and columns, that is, both for supported and supporting members. Hence, the temples of Palestine, and of Syria generally, by which we understand the Asia of the Old Testament, already described, were more spacious, but less durable than those of Egypt, and with fewer upright supports. Of this, a singularly striking proof occurs in the catastrophe of the House of Dagon, when Samson, by overturning only two columns, brought down the whole fabric.

As with the force of winds and waters pent,  
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars,  
With horrible convulsion, to and fro  
He tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew  
The whole roof after them, with bursts of thunder:  
The vulgar only 'scaped who stood without.

In an edifice constructed on the plan of the Egyptian Temple, where pillar stands crowded behind pillar, in range beyond range, to give support to the ponderous architrave and marble roof, the overturning of two of these columns would produce but a very partial disintegration. The very circumstance, also, of there being no remains in a country where once stood the most renowned cities, proves the perishable nature of the substance chiefly employed. There is evidence, also, that stone and wood were often, perhaps usually, combined—the first as a columnar or pier-like support, for horizontal beams of the latter. This plainly appears to have been the case in the oldest ruin existing in this part of the world, namely, Persepolis, where the marble columns evidently bear

marks of having been connected by cross beams of wood, and to have supported a roof of the same light structure. Hence the easy conflagration of this abode of the Persian kings, in a debauch of Alexander. The columns are loftier, further apart, and fewer in number, than in Egypt. Had not the illustration of the general subject been of more importance in the establishment of this point, reference might at once have been made to the early temples of Greece, which, even to the age of Xerxes, were structures of wood; and to the well-known difference of style between them and those of Egypt. Thus we have the second species of architectural design; and again find the facts, recounted by history, according with deductions from *a priori* consideration of the nature, objects, and origin, of the art itself. It may afford illustration of the certainty with which the principles of reasoning operate, while the fact is singular, that ancient writers describe the huts of the nomadic tribes on their dispersion, or, at least, the earliest recorded residences of mankind, as composed of poles, formed of the branches of trees, fixed in the earth, enclosing a circular space, and meeting at top, the sloping sides being covered with leaves, reeds, or skins. This is exactly the wigwam of the aboriginal inhabitant of America. So much is man the creature of the same instincts, under similar circumstances.

Climate will necessarily operate a considerable effect upon the external arrangements of architecture. According to the latitude of the situation, buildings will be contrived to admit or exclude the sun, to give shelter from biting cold, or to secure against scorching heat, or merely to yield shade, without immediate reference to either extreme. All these, however, will not affect the internal harmonies or proprieties of the constituent parts. Climate, therefore, is only modifying, not creative, as the



two preceding causes; it may suggest composition, but hardly design; for, with the exception of the pointed or flat roof, according to the humidity or dryness of the atmosphere, consequently the angular pediment surmounting the horizontal lines of the entablature, little of real form or order has been added, or materially influenced, by climate. This cause, however, has given rise to, or permitted, many picturesque combinations.

Purpose, besides the constitutional effects upon the science already described, necessarily occasions the various classes under which the labours of the architect may be arranged. Architecture, by this principle, is separated into two grand divisions—Civil and Military. The former of these, from its greater variety of purpose, is further subdivided into subordinate heads, namely, placing each in the order of its probable antiquity, Sacred, Monumental, Municipal, and Domestic. These modifications of purpose do not, indeed, give novel principles, nor do they affect any of the conclusions already explained; they have only, though strongly, influenced the practice of the art. In presenting an abstract of the history of the science of Architecture, then, it is not requisite to dwell particularly upon these divisions, nor to be guided by them in the future arrangement of our matter. But as we may occasionally revert, by a passing word, to the obvious distinctions which are thus perceived, a short explanation, especially as several scattered particulars of very early times can thus be properly assembled, will here be useful.

*Sacred Architecture* is a term sufficiently expressive of its own import. It was the primitive effort of the present race of man; the first impress of his existence left upon the soil, yet moist from the waters of the deluge, was the erection of an altar; and the noblest evidence of his most accomplished skill has been a temple:

——— ‘His greatest ornament of fame,  
And strength, and art.’

From the ‘altar builded by Noah,’ how interesting to follow out the effects of one uncontrollable, but, when unguided, erring sentiment in the steadfast piles — ‘works of Memphian kings,’ in the glorious proportions of Greece, where

——— ‘Doric pillars,  
Cornice, and frieze, with bossy sculptures graven,’

rear their graceful height, looking tranquil magnificence — down even to the rude circle of grey stones on the bleak heath! For this inquiry, visible materials are indeed wanting; but does not the Word of Truth supply the general inference, ‘The imaginations of man’s heart are wicked — he has sought out many inventions — but I will be honored among the generations of men?’

Incidental allusion has already been made to the marvellous fabric reared by Solomon, which, if not in grace, in splendor of decoration appears to have exceeded all the erections of the early ages, and is the first of which written notice remains. The descriptions of this building enable us to form a reunion of the arts of Sculpture and Architecture at the commencement of the tenth century before Christ. This date, however, we consider to be at least six hundred years later than the era of any Egyptian monument, not of brick, now extant throughout the whole course of the Nile. In considering, also, the countries whence Solomon obtained workmen, will be remarked the confirmation of the preceding observations on the originating causes of styles in architecture. The hewers of stone, we are informed, were from Egypt; and the solid substructions of the Jewish temple, the massive proportions of the separate parts — resemblances still more striking in Josephus’ account of the second edifice — show

exactly the same principles and practice as can to this day be traced in the Egyptian structures. From Phœnicia, again, a country abounding in timber, were brought the most skilful ‘hewers of wood,’ that is, workmen instructed in the arts of the joiner and carpenter, and also, as may be inferred from various descriptions of the ornamental appendages, of the carver or sculptor in wood, — ‘and the cedar of the house within was carved with open knops and flowers;’ again, and ‘he made two cherubims of olive tree.’ These sculptures, however, might have been finished, and, from the state of art in that country, most probably were the work of artists from Egypt. There can be no doubt that the ‘House,’ as the magnificent pile is emphatically termed, was of a quadrangular outline, erected upon a solid platform of stone, bearing a strong resemblance to the ancient temples still extant. Indeed, there is, in this respect, a most striking analogy between the dimensions as given in Scripture, and those of the oldest Greek temples, especially of Ægina and Pæstum. This latter we have examined, and, agreeing to the fidelity of the grounds upon which Wilkins has founded his reasonings, in the admirable dissertation on this subject in his preface to the ‘Antiquities of Magna Grecia,’ we cannot coincide in the final conclusion, that the Greeks borrowed the Doric order from this ancient temple of Solomon. Reference to this subject is hereafter to be made. In the meantime, while facts are fresh in the mind, it must be obvious to the reader, that, since the shell or carcass of the temple of Jerusalem was of stone, and built by Egyptian workmen, alone skilled in that material, the general arrangements would resemble those of the Egyptian temples. Consequently, the Greeks and the Jews, deriving their leading orders from one source, would naturally, though unconsciously, imitate each other. Again, since

wood was employed in every part of the roof and interior by Solomon, on the principles already explained, the relative proportions of the parts, and the number of the supports, would necessarily be different, compared with the similar members of Egyptian art. But the Greeks also in part followed the laws of wooden structure; consequently both differing, on similar principles, from the original model, would yet preserve mutual resemblance in that very difference.

*Monumental Architecture*, deriving its origin from allied feelings and associations, would be coeval, or nearly so, with the origin of sacred. Indeed, it is not possible always to separate the two distinct purposes. Monuments have two objects in view—to honor the memory of the dead, and to preserve remembrance of the transactions of the living; both of which are recorded in Scripture. The material of a monumental erection, and consequently its design, will always, in early times, be determined by the circumstances of the vicinity, with the sole exception of wood. Hence pillars of stone, and mounds of earth, are the primitive records of both life and death. In a more advanced age, when stone could not be readily procured, brick would be employed. The magnitude and beauty will accord with the skill of the times. Hence arise sources of determining the relative antiquity of monuments, and the circumstances of the age. Under almost every privation of means, and in all countries, ‘heaped earth’ would present a durable and an accessible material. Hence the universality of this species of monument throughout the globe. This primitive accumulation of efforts—for an earthen mound can be considered as nothing more—seems to have given origin to the most gigantic labours of human architecture. The pyramids of Egypt, and the cognate structures of India, seem to be



imitations, wonderful indeed, of the more ancient barrow. They are, in fact, but mounds of higher art and more valuable materials. Their intermediate forms, indeed, may be traced in both countries, at least in the curve which would bound the perpendicular section of the mound. In India, however, pyramids seem, from the extent of the interior, and the facility of access, to have been chiefly intended for places of crowded resort — most likely, therefore, temples. In Egypt, again, the single chamber, the imperviously closed entrance, appear to indicate with precision their original destination to have been sepulchral. It has already been remarked, that the Arts are themselves their own best interpreters, and that little faith is to be placed in the remote analogies of philology, which have too frequently been admitted in evidence beyond their value; but it has often been matter of surprise, that two words, belonging to the most ancient forms of the Syriac language, should have been overlooked in the numerous derivations of the word pyramid. *Peer* and *Muid*, as the words in question may be rendered in our characters, united, as in Eastern languages, forming compound expressions, would give almost identical sound, and in signification, ‘the hill or mountain of the dead,’ would be nearer the purpose and appearance than any derivation with which we are acquainted.

Under the head of *Municipal Architecture* is included every application of the science to those purposes of social life not included under the former heads, such as public buildings of all descriptions connected with the civil business of life, up to the arrangements of entire cities. Men, therefore, must have been assembled together for some time, they must have agreed upon certain compacts and regulations of society, before this branch could have made any progress in the world. Yet we find, that not more

than a century after the flood, a city was begun, a fact already attempted to be explained; and to what was then said it may be farther added, that the Tower of Babel, which belonged to this city, was clearly monumental—it was ‘to make a name.’ Although no vestiges of the ancient cities of Asia or of Egypt remain, sufficient from inspection to corroborate the descriptions of history, these lead to the belief, that, in many instances, the plan and architecture were both regular and grand. The reader, however, ought to be on his guard against the amplifications of Scriptural and Homeric accounts contained in later authorities, in as far as the former describe relatively, according to the state of things in their own age and experience; whereas the latter, too often forgetting this distinction, convey the impression, that grandeur and magnificence were absolute. Yet, even with this abatement, there remains sufficient ground of admiration in the ideas excited of Thebes, Babylon, Nineveh, or Memphis. There appears, in this respect, a very striking difference between the cities of the second age, after the arts had migrated into Europe. Many circumstances tend to confirm the opinion, that, even in Greece, Municipal Architecture in general was not much studied, and that there were few, if any, really fine cities among the numerous capitals of that country. Their magnificence was concentrated in particular spots—in their agorai, or squares. Their temples usually stood apart; so that, like the cities of modern Italy, whatever might be the beauty, or the romantic effect of their distant appearance, internally, they often appear to have been little more than an irregular assemblage of narrow winding streets. Such we know Athens to have been to a very late period. Sparta was long an unwall’d village. Argos, Thebes, or Corinth, cannot be placed in comparison with the

before mentioned capitals of Asia and Egypt. Even Rome, to the age of Nero, was crowded, unwholesome, and mean, over a great portion of its less important surface. In one respect, however, it seems to have differed greatly from every other ancient city of which we read, namely, in the great elevation of the houses; in almost every other instance we are led to an opposite inference, which is further corroborated by the present appearance of Pompeii.

With the *Domestic Architecture* of the primitive ages, to which our accounts have hitherto been confined, the acquaintance to be obtained is exceedingly limited. In the description of Solomon's Palace, and in various passages of Homer, considerable details are given of the palatial dwellings; but how the greater part of mankind were lodged, few means of determining remain. Protection against the vicissitudes of climate would first employ the instinctive ingenuity of man; next, conveniency would be consulted, by enlarging the dimensions of his abode. Both these objects might be obtained, while yet the original circular area was retained. As some ideas, however, of the comforts and decencies of life prevailed, seclusion of the different orders and sexes in the members of the family would be sought; and hence division of one common apartment into separate portions. But as circular space admits of division very imperfectly, and with loss, this new necessity would introduce, or at least render permanent, the rectangular shape of the domestic abode.

*Military Architecture* is but little connected with the history of the science, from the peculiar nature of those principles of construction which it recognises. Here design is regulated by circumstances external to the art, and which, therefore, though enriched by novel combi-

nations in its later and more impure modes, received originally no component elements, from a branch which has universally and largely engrossed the attention of mankind. The application of architecture to the purposes of defence, would not take place till a comparatively later period in the history of the species. Men would previously have acquired ideas of the right and value of property, and divided into separate communities by political or moral distinctions. Mere defence would be the first object in military erections; a wall, a rampart, or barrier, of altitude and strength sufficient to resist, or rather to disappoint, any sudden attack, would be all for some time required; and, subsequently, with facility of access to the summit, for the purpose of hurling stones from vantage ground upon the assailants, these defences for long would be complete, by the obvious addition of a ditch. As the arts of violence, and especially as missile warfare improved, experience would point out the impossibility of defending, even with a ditch, a long unbroken line of wall, consistently with the safety of the defenders, who, in the attempt to overlook the whole, would necessarily be exposed to the hostile weapons. To obviate this defect, and that the whole line might be seen, and the approaches commanded from points within itself, towers projecting beyond the face of the wall were constructed, thus finishing the whole of the science of ancient fortification. Cities, with towers and battlements on this plan, were found by the Jews in Syria, where they had existed for ten centuries before. The same was the system of the Greeks and Romans; and all the varieties of feudal defences are but applications, and even the inventions now in use are but modifications of the primeval fortress, which, in adaptations to the exigencies and science of the time, have also removed from it all picturesque effect and



all scenic grandeur, such as the fortalice of old, even in its 'ruins grey,' yet produces.

Such is a rapid sketch of the origin and principles of architectural design; and such the extent to which, in practice, history informs us they had been carried in the ancient world. The details, necessarily very imperfect, now given, belong to what may be termed the first age in the history of the art. The second era commences with the earliest appearances of regular architectural science in Europe, marked by the erection of temples in Greece, soon after, or nearly contemporary with, the labours of Solomon, which were commenced 1015 B. C.

Before entering upon European art, it will be useful, as formerly hinted, briefly to examine the monuments still existing in Egypt of the architecture of the first age, — the probable sources of those primitive modes, which, adopted in rudeness, by Grecian taste refined and matured, have become immutable. In addition to what has already been stated in the first article, and in reference to the present subject, it will be necessary merely to explain the general character and principles of these aboriginal structures, with the view of ascertaining whether, and to what extent, these have influenced the subsequent and more perfect science of the Grecian architect.

Of ancient Egypt, the government was not only peculiar, but contemplated peculiar results—pursued, too, with undeviating purpose, through an unknown succession of ages. Hence the enduring greatness of the works it has left; but as the ends were, from the commencement, so fixed as to forbid progressive means, hence the uniformity of imperfect character in these labours, exhibiting much of the elements, but none of the perfections of taste.

The eternal durability to which, in all things, the hierarchy aspired, pointed out a style of architecture, especially in their sacred buildings, retaining, as most substantial, only the simplest forms and the largest masses. Hence, in these mysterious structures, whatever deficiency may be perceived in beauty or grace, is compensated by vastness and simplicity, the most powerful elements of the grand. In beholding these mighty fabrics, then, even laying aside the associations of unnumbered centuries, if neither the most refined nor agreeable emotions be experienced, the imagination is exalted to a high pitch of awe, astonishment, and admiration. Long withdrawing lines, unbroken surfaces, simple contours, immense blocks, even while the individual forms are destitute of proportion, harmony, or grace, will ever produce a solemn sublimity of effect.

But it now occurs to inquire, before the merit of rational design can be granted, or these architectonic labours admitted among the works of genius, — Do these lofty effects arise from principle, or are they purely accidental? Are they the meditated results of science and taste, or are they merely inevitable consequences of the large and enduring style which the political system recommended?

Upon the nature of the reply to these questions will, in a great measure, depend the rank of the Greeks, as original inventors and refiners of taste in architecture. Now, there can be no doubt that in these, to use Strabo's expression, 'barbarous monuments of painful labour,' the sublimity and imposing solemnity of the general effect is incidental, not inherent. It is the grandeur of mass, not of proportion. The imagination is subdued, indeed, by vastness, but neither is the fancy delighted by tracing a well preserved resemblance to any acknowledged proto-

type, nor is the judgment instructed by the contemplation of a harmony consistent in itself, though deriving its elements from no immediate source. We discover neither imitation nor creative taste, for imitation is ever destroyed by some monstrous incongruity, and originality becomes aimless through interminable variety of accessories. As a science, then, beyond the rules necessarily imposed by the leading intention of durability, we detect nothing in the architecture of Egypt like the universal harmony given to it in Greece. The same is the character of Indian art, with still more of incongruous union; for here the massive simplicity of the original, or at least earliest source, for so we have already shown Egyptian art to be, is broken down and loaded with frittered and pretending ornament. Syria, or the vast district lying between, furnishes nothing beyond conjecture, or rather in the only instance, that of Solomon's labours, where we attain some information on which implicit reliance may be placed — clear manifestations are discovered of mixed art, in which that of Egypt predominated. Thus, in the whole of the ancient world, about a thousand years before our present era, and when the Greeks first, or soon after, began to erect temples, there existed no science complete in itself, or whose principles even had been elicited from the chaotic mass of materials, by which they could have been directed, in their own matchless monuments. Whatever of grace and of beauty — of dignity and truth — of sublimity and harmonious proportion, — whatever of architectonic excellence, grounded on the most profound principles of taste, and established on the sure basis of geometry, — whatever of all this can be discovered in the building of Greece, she owes it to the superiority of native genius. Yet the obligations to Egyptian predecessors were neither few nor unimportant. The rectangular

area, in which the breadth should bear a proportion less to the length, a shape of all others best adapted to beauty and convenience, was introduced. A still less obvious source of almost every higher beauty in the science — columnar architecture — was there practised so early, that whether it originated in the country, or was introduced, is unknown. Even the system of ornament may, in its rise at least, be traced in these primeval remains; for not a single detail afterwards introduced may not, in a rudimental, often nearly perfected state, be remarked; especially the beautiful idea of floral ornaments. Lastly, in the works of Egyptian art, very perfect examples of mechanical practice, both in dressing and laying the materials, might be observed in almost every instance. All these elements, however, the last excepted, jarring among themselves, whether as wholes or parts, were to be selected, arranged, methodized, and animated by grace, harmony, nobleness, — in short, the science of architecture was yet to be created.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

IN treating briefly of the architecture of Greece, though there still exist remains of astonishing magnitude, and of the greatest beauty yet attained among men, there are, notwithstanding, manifold difficulties in the attempt to treat historically of its origin and progress. Whatever information is to be derived from native writers composes merely incidental notices, mixed up with those wild tra-



ditions and dreamy lore, in which the Greeks, from ignorance or vanity, or both, seem to have delighted in wrapping up the sources of their knowledge. It is almost certain, indeed, that they never possessed, on the present subject, any writings beyond the mere technical treatises which must have been in the hands of architects. The compilation of Vitruvius might be supposed amply to supply this defect of more original materials; but, as respects the history of the art, this is not the case. His accounts of the state of architecture in his own time, that of Augustus, and the various scientific details into which he enters, are excellent; they show him to have probably possessed all the requisites which he enumerates as necessary to form an accomplished architect, high as he rates the profession. The historical department of his work, again, is extremely defective, not only in point of research, but in the fanciful nature of the theories. He entirely keeps out of view all reference to skill anterior to the arts of Greece; while, with the incredible fables received in that country, he mixes up no less groundless notions of his own. To these difficulties in the more ancient sources of information, there is to be added the obscurity arising from modern hypothesis.

Under these circumstances, and while the present limits preclude lengthened discussion on any topic, the most eligible and useful procedure appears to offer in a plain narrative of facts, illustrated by a description of actual remains, by reference to ancient authors, particularly Homer, and by analogies drawn from the state of society and manners. Here there can be given only the general results of such an inquiry.

The earliest architectural remains in Greece appear to have been military erections, or at least constructions for the purposes of defence. This corresponds with the

condition of a country, peopled, as we know this portion of Europe to have been, when first noticed in history, by different tribes, hostile, generally speaking, to each other, and in all instances fearing and feared by the rude and fierce aboriginal possessors. In the instances where comparison can be instituted, the gigantic elements of these structures, and the manner of their union, refer us to Egypt, or the cognate style of Syria; most probably, however, to the former, by way of Crete, which, as already shown, formed the intervening station in the progress of civilization. The traditions, whether poetical, or merely narrative, connected with these monuments — whether they be ascribed to the labours of the gods, or to the arts of the Cyclops, whence their common appellation — all point to a foreign origin, and to imported skill. This knowledge, too, must have been brought from a distance. Even on the adjacent shores of Asia, we find the walls of Troy ascribed by Homer to celestial skill — a clear proof that in his time there existed, neither in Greece, nor in the neighboring regions, experience adequate to such a work.

Of these fortresses, the most celebrated, and probably the most ancient, is Tyrens, in the plain of Argos, and attributed to the Lycians, about six generations prior to the Trojan war. This cyclopean wall includes a circuit of about a quarter of a mile, enclosing an inconsiderable elevation above the general level of the plain. Thus have evidently been composed the defences of the included town; but the disproportion between the means of security and the object protected appears amazing, and must have been considered as wonderful even in the age of Homer, who, in his catalogue, distinguishes this city by the epithet 'well-walled,' or, as Pope has rendered the passage,

Whom strong Tyrenthé's lofty walls surround.

Indeed, of all the characteristics added to the Grecian confederates, the distinction of their walled cities is by far the most frequent. Of all these, however, the one now mentioned only retains a degree of regularity seeming to bid defiance to further dilapidation from time, and capable of being overturned only by a force equal to that employed in the construction. Several entrances are yet to be traced, one of which has, opening into it, a gallery formed in the thickness of the wall. It is worthy of remark, that the top of this passage is covered, exactly as in the great pyramid, by immense stones, placed one on each side, and meeting at an acute angle in the centre. Near in point of situation, but somewhat later in time, are the walls of the 'proud Mycenæ' of Homer, an interesting ruin in the age of Thucydides, four hundred years before our era. These remains show evident correspondence with the style of Egypt. The very gateway, described by the author just mentioned, and subsequently by Pausanius, still remains; formed of single blocks, the jambs incline narrowing upwards to eight feet, and support a lintel twelve feet in length.\*

Next in point of antiquity and preservation to the preceding are those singular remains in Greece; to which the name of Treasury has been given, on the supposition, that as the former were constructed as defences against hostile violence, the latter were erected as places of security for valuable property. From the frequent mention of such structures during the heroic age, and from the preservation of the names, true or false, of two architects, Agamides and Trophonius, most eminent in their construction, they seem to have been regarded as

\* In these ruins are two lions sculptured in relievo described by Pausanius, and remaining the most ancient accredited monument of the art in Greece.

of no ordinary importance. We are informed that both states and individuals had such places of safe custody, before temples either existed or were employed as repositories for treasure. Of these buildings, one of the most perfect, and indeed the most interesting relic of those earliest times, is the treasury of Atreus amid the ruins of Mycenæ. Externally it presents the appearance of a mound of earth; but the interior is found to be a magnificent structure, circular, fifty feet in diameter, and rather more in height, composed of stones of great size, each course projecting inwards and over the one below, till, meeting in a small aperture at top, the whole is shut in by a mass of very large dimensions. The general form is thus a hollow cone, or paraboloid, the surface of which appears to have been coated with plates of metal, as brazen nails still remain in many parts. These defences, both for person and property, prepared with such skill and solicitude, afford a very striking view of the turbulent and dangerous state of society. They are, in fact, records, lasting almost as the Iliad itself, of an age capable of such outrages as gave foundation to that divine poem, and to whose verisimilitude they thus supply unequivocal testimony.

Into the condition of domestic architecture during the same period, neither the poems of Homer, nor any collateral source, afford much insight. Both in the Iliad and Odyssey, palaces are described, but in an extremely general as well as indefinite manner. Between these loose accounts and the graphic delineations which the same author has given of sculptured ornaments, as in the shield of Achilles, it is easy to perceive the difference of a description without a model, and from reality. Sculpture, as a regular art, had already made progress; the science of architecture was yet unknown. These palaces, which



appear to have answered all purposes of public edifices, are described as very capacious, as containing numerous apartments, and as very rich in doors of ivory and gold, with posts of silver; but not the slightest impression occurs indicative of any regular order of architectonic ornament or design. Magnificence and lavish profusion of splendor are everywhere confounded with beauty and grace and regular art. During the Homeric age, then, it is plain that the orders were yet unknown—a deduction exactly tallying with the state of art in Egypt, where from the inspection of existing monuments, it is evident, that a system or order was in like manner undiscovered. True, the Egyptain edifices resemble each other in general character, and even to their measurements agree; but the same building rises into endless multiplicity of subordinate parts and forms. So Homer heaps riches upon riches, ornament above ornament, making that fine which he cannot render great. This affords more valuable evidence of his veracity than it detracts from his genius. Even the palace of Troy, though Paris himself is represented as a great architect, is described in the same general terms:

And now to Priam's stately courts he came,  
Raised on arch'd columns of stupendous frame;  
O'er these a range of marble structure runs,  
The rich pavilion of his fifty sons,  
In fifty chambers lodged; and rooms of state,  
Opposed to these, where Priam's daughters sat;  
Twelve domes for them, and their loved spouses shone,  
Of equal beauty, and of polished stone.

This, and indeed almost every other passage referring to the practical arts of antiquity, is very incorrectly translated. From a comparison of various original descriptions of palatial buildings, a tolerable idea of the highest efforts

of architecture during the Homeric and succeeding ages may be obtained. They appear universally to have been placed so as to enclose a court, along the sides of which ran an open corridore, formed by pillars; for the word corresponding to column does not once occur in the *Iliad*. These pillars, as may still be seen in Egyptian buildings, were united by flat epistylia or architraves, for the phrase, 'arched columns,' is nonsense. During the times of the *Iliad*, no division of stories appears to have been practised; and the expression lofty chamber, so often occurring, seems to imply that the whole was open to the roof; for the apartments, with the exception of the great hall, do not otherwise induce the idea of great magnitude. In the *Odyssey* again, to this mode of division distinct reference is made, a circumstance which, with many others respecting the arts, points to a later as the age of that poem. The roof itself may be inferred from incidental remarks to have been pointed, composed of wooden beams inclined towards each other, and supported in the central angle by columns or shafts of wood; for wherever the word occurs in the early poetical literature of Greece, an internal member is implied, and from the casual introduction, one of necessity, not ornament, the only adjunct being lofty or tall, exactly corresponding with the distinction here supposed.

It is evident, then, that we must examine elsewhere for the origin of ornamental architecture in Greece. And the only other department of the art refers to buildings for sacred purposes. But even here, mighty and graceful as are the existing ruins, many ages elapse before we reach the era of the temple — where

The whole so measured true, so lessen'd off,  
By fine proportion that the marble pile,  
Form'd to repel the still or stormy waste

Of rolling ages, light as fabrics look'd,  
That from the magic wand aerial rise.

Throughout the whole of the *Iliad* no mention occurs of a temple in Greece, except in the second book, evidently incidental, and the interpolation of some vainly patriotic Athenian rhapsodist. The passage, indeed, might be condemned, on the grounds of philological discussion, but it contradicts both the history of art and of religion in that country. In Troy, the temple of Minerva appears to have been a mere shrine, in which a statue was enclosed, and probably, in Tenedos, a temple of Apollo is merely alluded to. During the age of Homer, then, the primeval altar, common both to Europe and Asia, was the only sacred edifice known. This differed little from a common hearth; the sacrifice being in fact a social rite, the victim, at once an offering to heaven, and the food of man, was prepared by roasting; the first improvement upon this simple construction appears to have been the addition of a pavement, an obvious means of cleanliness and comfort. Yet even this appears to have constituted a distinction at least not common, since, in particular instances, the pavement is mentioned as a peculiar ornament. Subsequently, in order to mark in a more conspicuous manner, and with more dignity, the sacred spot, while the rites should be equally exposed to the spectators, an open colonnade was added, enclosing the altar and pavement. Thus the roofless temple might be said to be finished; but whether this primeval structure existed in his native country during the age of Homer, does not appear. We remark here a very striking resemblance between the ancient places of devotion in Greece, and the Druidical temple of the more northern regions. In fact, the astonishing remains at Stonehenge present the best known, and perhaps one of the

most stupendous examples ever erected of the open temple. This species of religious erection appears to have been co-extensive with the spread of the human race, and not, as generally supposed, limited to the northern portion of the globe.

The revolutions in Greece, which abolished the regal, while they respected and increased the pontifical authority, the gradual additions of magnificence and convenience to the places of sacrifice, producing at length the regular temple; the change of design from the circle to the quadrangle; all these can now only be conjectured as to their causes and progressive vicissitudes. One thing appears certain, that the earliest approaches to the perfect temple were erections of wood; and this materially contributed to fix the character of later architecture: yet there still remain temples of stone, whose date transcends the epochs of known history. During this interval, Grecian architecture assumed regularity and science, for the earliest dawnings of authentic information light us to monuments of a systematic style, differing from the Egyptian in the rejection of all variety of ornament, yet, like it, solemn, massive, and imposing. This is the order which, subsequently, under the name of Doric, extended over the whole of Greece and her colonies. To this the most ancient species of the art, various origin has been assigned; but from our imperfect knowledge of contemporary events, and from the impossibility of extending research, it is plain that nothing can with certainty be known. The most ably supported, but not less improbable theory, is that of Dr Wilkins, already referred to, who supposes the order to have been directly introduced from Syria, and Solomon's temple; his reasonings and calculations on this subject present a rare combination of ingenuity, learning, and practical science. The



premises, however, are assumed, namely, that the word translated 'chapter' in the common version of the book of Kings, means not only the capital, but includes the entablature also; a gratuitous assumption, opposed by the dimensions still visible in the parent source of Egyptian columns, and which, even granted, would not prove an identity in purpose and proportion with the Greek order. The hypothesis of Vitruvius is fanciful, namely, that the proportion of the human foot to the height of the body, was adopted as the rule for the proportion of the base to the elevation of the column. The most probable view seems to be, that this order sprung up as the fruit of continued observation on the practice of Egyptian art, as compared with the methods of wooden erection employed among the early Greeks themselves. This would necessarily give an intermediate style in simplicity and lightness; the pine, common in the ancient forests of Greece, truncated for any purpose, gives at once a very near approximation to the shaft; the same tree converted into a squared beam, gives the horizontal binding or architrave; the merely ornamental or subordinate members would be suggested in progressive operations of experience, or they might be introduced by selection; for, as already noted, every ornament of succeeding art, though not under the same combinations, is to be found in the Egyptian modes. The whole history of taste, even as touched upon in these pages, favors this slow and native growth of an art among every people remarkable for its successful cultivation. The three orders — the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian, exhibit also this gradual process of discovery and advance to perfection. It is historically, as well as poetically true, that

— First, unadorn'd,  
And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose;

The Ionic then with decent matron grace  
Her airy pillar heaved ; luxuriant last  
The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath.

The character of genius in Greece likewise favors these views, more exquisitely alive to beauty, to propriety, to decorous simplicity and grandeur, than distinguished for those qualities that more decisively belong to invention — fire, impetuosity, wild irregularity, or rude majesty.

Neither then were the primitive elements invented, and thence without aid of more ancient knowledge, the orders or systems of architecture brought to perfection in Greece ; nor was any one of these introduced wholly or at once in a state approaching to perfect symmetry and arrangement. In this, as in all their arts, no less than in their literature, the Greeks borrowed, imitated, selected, — and yet they created — they assimilated discordant variety to one solemn breathing harmony — they brought out every latent germ of beauty that lay overwhelmed in the mass of more ancient thought. From the dark yet mighty accumulations of Eastern knowledge and skill, their genius spake forth that light and that perfection which, in human wisdom and taste, still guides, corrects, and animates. Yet their improvements were but so many — important indeed — intermediate gradations in the universal system of obligation which nations owe to each other. But while sound judgment constrains the rejection of the exclusive pretensions of the Greek writers on the particular subject in question, it must be confessed there is in these something more than pleasing. They are not selfish ; they are deeply connected with the sympathies and the feelings — the truest, best associations in objects of art. Though we find all the elements of composition in Egyptian architecture, and must believe that

the Greek orders were in their origin thence derived; yet the very idea, that the sedate grandeur of the Doric borrowed its majesty from imitation of man's vigorous frame and decorous carriage; or that the chaste proportions of the graceful Ionic were but resemblances of female elegance and modesty, — the belief of all this, so carefully cherished, was calculated to produce the happiest effect upon living manners. So also, though the origin of the Corinthian capital is apparent in an object emblematic over the whole East, and not unknown even in some Christian forms, the mysterious lotus, whose leaves so frequently constitute the adornment of the Egyptian column; still, how dear to the heart the thought of most perfect skill receiving its model from the humble tribute of affection placed on the grave of the Corinthian maid, round which nature had by chance thrown the graceful acanthus! If, in the sober inquiries of history, such opinions are removed, the act is done with regret. Yet in this onward path of truth, if one blossom planted there by human feeling must be beaten down, how grateful the incense even of the crushed flower!

The three orders now mentioned constitute the whole system of Greek architecture. The Doric appears to have been the most ancient, and continued down to the period of the Roman conquest to be most extensively employed in the European states of Greece, as these were colonized chiefly by the Dorians — hence the name. Of this order are the most celebrated remains of ancient art, which may be divided into two great classes, namely, those of Greece, and of the Greek settlements in Sicily and Southern Italy. The first class of buildings comprehends a space extending from the earliest traditions, when *Æachus*, in the commencement of the tenth century before Christ, is reported to have built the temple of Jupi-

ter still remaining in Ægina, to the erection of the Parthenon, the noblest monument of this order, which, from its beauty, and the predilection in its favor, has been termed the Grecian. Subsequently, decline appears so early as the era of the Macedonian empire; but the latest erection is supposed coeval with the reign of Augustus. Within the ten centuries thus comprehended between the first and last application of the Doric order, must have been erected those magnificent structures whose ruins still adorn Greece. The probable ages of these are as follow: commencing with the Ægenetic ruin just mentioned, whose date is lost in remote antiquity, and which seems to have formed the second remove only in the march of art westward from its primeval sources, to Crete, Ægina, Greece. Next, the celebrated four columns near Corinth. The temple of Jupiter at Olympia either precedes or follows, the architect Libon, and the roof, the first of the kind, formed of marble tiles, the invention of Byzes of Naxos. An interval occurs here, carrying us forward to the Athenian structures, the most ancient of which, the temple of Theseus, belongs to a much later period than any of the preceding. The date of the Propylea and the Parthenon crowning the Acropolis, and placed in situation as in excellence eminently conspicuous, is fixed by the most splendid names in Grecian art; — they were built under the direction of Phidias, the former by Mnesicles, the latter by Ictinus, encouraged by the patronage of Pericles.

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,  
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?  
Gone — glimmering through the dream of things that were.  
First in the race that led to Glory's goal, —  
They're sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,  
Dim with the mist of years, grey flits the shade of power.



To Ictinus is also to be ascribed the most perfect vestige of antiquity now in existence, the Temple of the Apollo Epicurius, in Arcadia, and which is reported to have been one of the most splendid buildings of the Peloponnesus. The magnificent columns which 'crown Sunium's marble steep,' belong to the same era, and probably to the same school. For sixty years afterwards, we have no decline in the grandeur or purity of the Doric, as yet appears in the ruins of Messene, a city built by Epaminondas, and still exhibiting the most perfect specimen of ancient military architecture. But the victories of this warrior were parricidal triumphs; they were gained over those who ought to have been as brothers. In sculpture, we have already seen that this era marks the retrogression of the manly and the grand in style; it is so in architecture, for in less than forty years, a great declension in these respects must have taken place in this the grandest and most severe of the orders, as is attested by the specimen in the isle of Delos, inscribed with the name of Philip of Macedon. After this the Doric either fell into desuetude, or the works have perished, for the only remaining example is the portico, erected by Augustus in one of the *agorai* or squares of Athens.

Of the remains of Doric architecture in the ancient seats of the Sicilian and Italian colonies, the dates, even with ordinary accuracy, it is impossible individually to ascertain. The former claim the highest antiquity in some, but not in all instances. The temple of Egesta, in the interior of the island, is perhaps one of the oldest, yet among the least imperfect monuments of the art in Europe; contemporary or earlier, is the temple of Minerva, at Syracuse; the other remains near that city are of a later date. The ponderous ruins at Selinus, which

consist of no less than six temples, one of which, three hundred and thirty-one feet in length, composed of a double peristyle of columns sixty feet high, must have presented one of the sublimest objects ever reared by human art. Ruins at Agrigentum — Temple of Juno most picturesque, of Concord very perfect — three others, last the grand Temple of Olympian Jupiter, one of the most stupendous buildings of the ancient world, and whose buried materials swell into hills or subside in valleys, over which we have ourselves wandered, without at first knowing that we trode upon the prostrate labours of man, and not the workings of nature.

With the exception of the two first, these remains as also the Temple of Apollo, at Gela, seem to be nearly of the same age. Indeed, their erection can be fixed between certain limits, by comparison of historical details, in which, either by direct mention or inference, a connexion is traced between the political condition and the arts of the Sicilian cities. Proceeding in this manner, it is found that all of these enormous piles rose in little more than a century, embracing the greater part of the fifth, and the early portion of the fourth, before our era. These edifices thus fall in with the interval already noticed between the earliest Doric buildings in Greece, and the erection of the Athenian temples. Accordingly, there appear in them more noble proportions and a greater elevation of column than in the former, still without the graceful majesty of the latter. Under what circumstances, however, or by what science, many of these wonderful fabrics were reared, history affords no information. Of the rise and the overthrow, for instance, of the temples at Selinus, we know nothing; some even doubt whether human power could have overthrown what it had elevated; and ascribe the regular prostration of the

gigantic columns, each often exactly in a line, extending outwards from its base, as if overturned but yesterday, to the concussion of an earthquake. These appearances we have certainly remarked with astonishment, and have beheld, and measured, and wandered amid the ruins, with admiration not unmingled with awe; but the truth was obvious, that the same age which could arrange these masses into symmetry, could also have cast them down as they now lie. And we know that it was the same age — for one page, almost one sentence, records both their rise and their fall. Yet of the energies and knowledge of that age, our own has no conception. The riches of any one of the sovereigns of Europe, and the skill of his wisest subjects, would barely suffice for the erection of only one of the six Selinuntine temples — the works of a distant colony of Greece. That this may not appear exaggeration, let the reader contemplate for a moment an edifice — the porticos of which alone would require one hundred columns of stone, each sixty feet high, and thirty in circumference — such was the great Temple of Selinus.

The celebrated ruins of Pæstum, consisting of two temples and a quadrangular portico, containing eighteen columns in flank, and seven in front, compose the only Grecian Doric remains in Italy. The date and origin of these structures will probably ever remain liable to doubt. This arises partly from the singular nature of some of the buildings themselves, as well as from the obscurity which rests upon this portion of history in general. The greater of the two temples bears evident character of the same design and architectural principles as the Sicilian edifices; between which latter, indeed, as compared with each other, there exists, in this respect, a very striking uniformity, pointing to a nearly contemporary erection. Hence

the inference seems clear, that to the same era the Pæstan ruin is to be referred, and that it is the work of Greek colonists from Sybaris, who, from the middle of the sixth century B. C., for more than two hundred years enjoyed peaceable possession of this part of Lucania. This temple, though not equal in magnitude to some ruins in Sicily, is a very noble, and the largest pile in a state of such perfection out of Greece. Not a single column of the outer peristylia is wanting. It was within this 'pillared range,' during the moonlight of a troubled sky, we experienced emotions of the awful and sublime, such as impress a testimony, never to be forgotten, of the power of art over the affections of the mind.

The other ruins, which some consider a temple and a hall of justice, others, with greater probability, two temples, though, like the former in situation,

They stand between the mountain and the sea,  
Awful memorials, but of whom we know not,

are far inferior in dignity of effect and purity of style. Nor are these defects the consequences of a progressive knowledge advancing to better things, they are evident corruptions of ancient simplicity. Both these are to be referred to a period posterior to the Roman conquest of the city, which occurred in the 481st year of Rome, that is, not three centuries before our era. Of the same age are the walls, remaining in considerable entireness, especially the eastern gate, as represented in the vignette, where the voussoirs, or arch-stones, still span the entrance.

Here it may be proper, without going into the particular facts and reasonings upon which the inference is founded, merely to state, that, regarding the introduction of the arch into classic architecture, the weight of evidence is against any knowledge of its use or construction prior to the era of Alexander. Indeed, the arch is contrary to



the whole genius of the Greek system, which delights in the simplicity of horizontal and perpendicular lines, to which the contrasts, minute divisions, and constantly recurring breaks of arched building, are most directly opposed. During the pure ages of truly Grecian taste, the very improvements and changes which successively ensued, all tended to guide invention farthest from the arch. To add elevation to the column, and to increase the unbroken length of the entablature, were objects most directly pursued. The greater richness or variety of ornament thus admitted, was an advantage rather incidental than contemplated, though with exquisite skill rendered available —

—— without o'erflowing — full.

Whether the Ionic order of architecture originated merely as a variation on the 'Dorian mode,' or as a separate invention, it is not easy, and not of much importance, to determine. The two ideas may be reconciled; remains of Ionic are found coeval with the earliest certain accounts of the Doric edifices; so far the former was independent, and having arisen among the Ionian states, where subsequently it continued to be employed in preference, it thus obtained a distinct name and character. Afterwards, however, on being brought into use in European Greece, architects appear to have studied its capabilities, chiefly in contrast with the corresponding proprieties of the Doric. Here something like an encroachment was made on its separate identity; or rather, the artists of those times contemplated each system as a modification, in part, of one great whole, bearing a relation only to the emotions of grandeur and beauty. This is still the proper view in which the orders are to be regarded in reference to excellence in architectural composition. Now, indeed, the

moderns possess the advantage of a principle then unknown — the principle of association, which both limits the field of choice, and increases the beauty of a just selection.

Of the Ionic order, few remains are extant in Greece or her colonies — few, we mean, as compared with the amazing structures just considered. The Temple of Juno, in the Isle of Samos, raised about the first Olympiad by Ræchus and Theodorus, already noticed as the founders of the Samian School of Sculpture, supplies the earliest specimen. This, in the age of Herodotus, was the grandest building in Greece. How rapidly the order must have improved! Many archaisms, not to say barbarous inventions, occur. Next in age has been placed the singular but not ungraceful monument at Agrigentum, called the Tomb of Theron. Here we discover, indeed, Ionic columns, but everything else is Doric — proofs, first, of the antiquity of the monument; and secondly, of the truth of our opinion, more than once hinted in these pages, that the Dorian colonies in Sicily were original settlements from the East, little or no intermediate connexion having taken place between them and the Dorians of the Peloponnesus, who affected to be considered as the mother country. If pursued to the full extent of its consequences, this position would go far to explain several doubts, in regard to the early power and arts of the Sicilian and Lucanian cities. The earliest example of the true Ionic, is the Temple of Bacchus at Teos, erected, most probably, soon after the Persian invasion, or not later than fifty years after, or about 440 B. C. At Athens, however, in the temples of Minerva, Polias, and Erechtheus, is to be found the most perfect remain of this order, but of what precise date is uncertain, — probably about the era of the Peloponnesian war. Near Miletus, the

Temple of Apollo, erected by the architects Peonius and Daphnis, brings us down to that of Minerva at Priene, by Pitheas, in the age of Alexander ; after which no specimens are to be found more ancient than the Roman conquest, with the exception of some in different parts of Asia Minor, whose dates cannot be ascertained.

In these two orders, now described, almost every beauty of composition had been attained, except facility of arrangement, with that extreme simplicity in which the taste of 'early Greece' seems to have placed the very perfection of the art. In the Doric, the triglyphs broke in upon the unity of the entablature viewed in perspective, producing also complexity in the intervals, or difficulty of managing them. The Ionic, by removing the divisions of the zoophorus, left the guiding lines of the horizontal members of the order unbroken, and with greater aptitude for the introduction of ornament ; still the capital deviated from the simple harmony — the object contemplated by the artist ; as it presented different aspects viewed in front or in flank, and also was not equally adapted to all situations in the same range. By the invention of the Corinthian, the beauties of the former orders were combined, while their defects were also obviated ; the removal of the triglyphs left the arrangement unembarrassed, while the circular capital presented always the same outline, and adapted itself equally to all positions. The system of Greek architecture, the most perfect combination of the necessities of science with forms most pleasing to the eye, that ever did, or, we may venture to say, will exist, was completed. When this perfection was attained is doubtful, as we have elsewhere shown ;\* but the question is of less importance, since it

\* See Edinburgh Encyclopædia, vol. xviii. part i. p. 21.

is known that the Corinthian order was employed by Scopas in the magnificent temple of Minerva at Tegea, erected between the 94th and 104th Olympiad, or nearly 400 years before the Christian era.

Of the remaining monuments of this order, few can be ascribed to the best ages of Grecian taste. It became the favorite style after Alexander, and especially of the Romans, to whom is to be attributed by far the greater part of the Corinthian remains now in Greece. The circular erection of Lysicrates, commonly termed, from the occasion commemorated, the Choragic Monument, built 342 B. C.; the octagonal edifice of Andronicus Cyrrhestes, apparently not much later; most probably the magnificent remains of the temple of the Olympian Jupiter; and, according to Stuart, another ruin, which he calls the *Poikele Stoa*, or painted portico, compose the sole remains of the order prior to the Roman conquest. The first is one of the most exquisite and perfect gems of architectural taste, and the purest specimen of the order, that has reached our time, whose minuteness and unobtrusive beauty have preserved it almost entire amid the ruins of the mightiest piles of Athenian art. The second is curious in its contrivance to supply ignorance of the arch. The fourth is of doubtful antiquity; but of the third, the columns, at least, are of the best age of Greece. These, composed of the finest white marble, and of the most perfect workmanship, with an elevation of nearly sixty feet, and belonging to an edifice four hundred long, awaken emotions of regret, of magnificence, and of beauty, difficult to comprehend or to impart.

In thus briefly following out the history of the orders, as far as researches can be authenticated by remaining examples, the narrative has conducted us to the death of Alexander, A. C. 324, while it has included the consider-



ation of every essential principle, for the Greeks never widely deviated from their established modes. The caryatic supports of the Temples of the Nymph Pandrosos, still almost perfect at Athens, and the Persian portico said to have been at Sparta, form the only exceptions to this observation. These, however, were never imitated — they were suffered as individual fantasies — not allowed as models. The period just considered, comprehending a space of about 113 years from Pericles to Alexander, was occupied almost exclusively with the perfecting and application of the Ionic and Corinthian orders. The art had now attained, in all its modes, the highest character of purity and magnificence.

For more than two successive centuries, the history of the art would conduct to consideration of the labours of the Greek princes in the East, when Asia received back the early information given to Europe. How vast the interval of obligation ! But of all the labours of those times, great as they must have been, when one alone of the Seleucidan dynasty founded forty cities, only a few remains in Ionia, with one or two in Greece, are known, or have been explored. To this period are doubtless to be referred ruins in the Greek style, said to exist in Syria and Persia, while, as already noticed, the Romans justly claim those more commonly visited ; but over all these hangs an obscurity perhaps now impenetrable. Innovations upon the severe purity of ancient taste were now certainly introduced ; still the art had not suffered any lapse ; the essential principles appear to have been fully understood, and sufficiently respected. This, indeed, is the case, to a degree of veneration not generally supposed, at least in the remains of Asia Minor, while now, in complete possession of a new and mighty element of design — the arch ; never before had architecture exhibited so great

capabilities, or powers adequate to the most gigantic works, whether of use or magnificence.

In this state the art passed into the hands of the Romans, when universal conquest had left them masters of the world. Thence commences a new era in the history of architecture, distinguished, however, rather by new applications than by fresh inventions. The art continued essentially Greek, for, though to the Etruscans, and subsequently to the early Romans, an order has been ascribed, no specimen of this Tuscan capital has come down to our times, and consequently there exist no means of tracing the narrative or descriptions of Vitruvius. But by the account even of this native writer, the public buildings of the regal and consular times were rude enough, exhibiting a state of the science as already described among the early nations of the East — vertical supports of stone, with wooden bearers. This continued to be their style of design and practice, till extending empire brought the Romans acquainted with the arts of the Dorian settlements on the east and southern shores of Italy. The situation of the capital, however, distant from accessible materials, the simplicity — not to say homeliness of manners — and the constant bent of the national genius towards foreign conquest, at first denied power to profit by accession of science, or subsequently diverted attention away from its pleasures and its advantages. Down to the conquest of Asia and the termination of the republic, Rome continued a ‘city of wood and brick.’ Only with the establishment of the empire and the reign of Augustus, with the wealth of the world at command, and the skill of Greece to direct the application, commences the valuable history of architecture among the Romans.

This, the last period of Classic Art, comprehends a space of about 350 years, terminating with the transfer-

ence of the seat of empire by Constantine, A. D. 306. Of this interval, however, only the smaller portion must be given to a taste even comparatively pure; for, great as were its resources, symptoms of the decay of art, continually increasing, are detected even from the first years of the imperial government. Without entering minutely into these gradations, the death of Hadrian, A. D. 138, may be assumed as including both the noblest erections and the better taste of the empire. That to this date, the essential characteristics of elegance and purity continued in a degree untainted, there is evidence in the works of Hadrian at Athens. Thus, during an interval of not less than 574 years, from Pericles to the last mentioned emperor, architecture, in this respect more fortunate than either sculpture or painting, flourished in splendor and excellence not greatly impaired.

Of all the fine arts — poetry not excepted — architecture is the only one into which the Roman mind entered with the real enthusiasm of natural and national feeling. Success corresponded with the exalted sentiment whence it arose; here have been left for the admiration of future ages, the most magnificent proofs of original genius. This originality, however, depends not upon *invention* so much as upon *application* of modes. To the architectonic system, indeed, the Romans claim to have added two novel elements in their own Doric, or Tuscan, and Composite orders. But in the restless spirit of innovation which these betray, the alleged invention discovers a total want of the true feeling and understanding of the science of Grecian design. In this very desire of novelty, and in the principles upon which it was pursued, are to be traced the immediate causes of ruin to the art, while yet its resources were unimpaired. The Romans unfortunately viewed the constituents of the Greek orders, and

even the orders themselves, as so many conventional ornaments, which might be changed or superseded on the laws of association, in the same manner as they were supposed to have been framed. This it is of importance to mark, for the very same have been the sources, and are still the operating causes, of inferiority in modern architecture. But the very opposite of all this is the case. Of this system, the Greeks, in the course of centuries, had founded what was conventional upon what is necessary; they had united beauty with science, by combinations the most pleasing to taste—because of this very union of effect and principle. Architecture, with them, was thus not more conventional than is every part of knowledge not immediately derived from sense—not more, for instance, than geometry; and its modes, therefore, as constituting one whole, became immutable, being only conventional, as expressions or representatives of truth.

This harmony, therefore, between the intellectual and the merely beautiful—the very perfection of the science of taste—the Greeks sought not by perilous experiments to disturb. Not that among them the vigor of independent genius was cramped; proper latitude of composition being allowed, licentiousness of fancy was restrained; each artist thought, in due subordination to the principles of a system which he knew to be as unchangeable as the laws that ensured the stability of his edifice. Hence, in every remain of Greek art, something peculiar is discoverable—some exquisite adaptation of parts to circumstances—to proportion—to feeling; but this never obtrudes—never is the general symmetry, or prevailing character, in the least interrupted. Even the orders observe the same law of composition. They are but variations of one grand abstraction of stability and grace, which may be termed the ideal of architecture. Each varies from another in



detail, but the result is one and the same concord ; the proportions in each differ, but the analogies of proportion are in all cases congenial. Even when, by addition or absence of parts, there is discriminative form, still the same final result of purpose or propriety is evident. In all, the same master lines meet the eye, guide the comprehension over all divisions, and bind the entire design into one grand harmonious whole. Similar means and similar harmonies everywhere occur ; the same in all is the last impress on the mind of symmetry and majestic repose — of grace and dignity — of steadfast tranquillity — of unlaboured elegance — and of rich simplicity.

The system in this, its perfect wholeness, the Romans never conceived, and upon this entireness their style first broke. They appear to have deemed that lightness and grace, here the great objects of their pursuit, were to be attained not so much by proportion between the vertical and horizontal, as by comparative slenderness in the former. Hence, in the very outset, is detected a poverty in the Roman architecture, even in the midst of profuse ornament, which, as we advance, continually increases with the practice whence it originated. The great error was a constant aim to lessen the diameter, while they increased the elevation, of the columns and supporting members generally — an error, as remarked by Plutarch, ‘to a Greek eye’ perceptible so early as the reign of Domitian. Hence the incongruities of the Roman orders, which yet are mere plagiarisms from the Greek, and upon this defective principle.

The massive simplicity and severe grandeur of the ancient Doric, disappear in the Roman, the characteristics of the order being frittered down into a multiplicity of minute members. This division is not only in itself injurious to the simple idea of strength, but the parts are

separately composed in ignorance of the primitive intention. To their two more refined orders, the Ionic and Corinthian, the Greeks always added a base, to unite them sweetly and gracefully with the plinth step, or floor; to the Doric, this accessory was always denied, that strong contrast might lead the eye at once from the support to the firm position of the vertical shaft — thus apparently still more securely planted, as resting immediately on the solid platform of the building. In opposition to these obvious principles, the Romans used the Doric always with a base, composed, too, of various members; while in the capital they erred still more against propriety. The Doric capital of the Greeks is a masterpiece of composition; — formed of few and bold, yet graceful parts, it leads by degrees of increasing strength to the surmounting entablature, which, with its triglyphs and sculptured metopes, seems to the eye yet more ponderous — ready to crush the starved and fluttering members, fillet above fillet, which compose the capital of the Roman pillar. The Corinthian is the only order which the Romans have employed with almost the undiminished grace of the original; but even here is distinctly to be traced the pernicious effects of their system. In the Ionic, they have left comparatively few examples, while, still following out their principle, they added to the length of the shaft, and flattened the capital, thus losing much of the simple yet stately elegance which distinguishes this order. Their own Composite is in some measure a combination of the Ionic and the Corinthian, having the volutes of the former and the foliage of the latter, upon which it is anything but an improvement, since it contradicts the character, and in a great degree opposes the advantages, of the primitive. As far, then, as concerns the invention of forms, and the just

conception of the elemental modes of Greece, the Romans failed. Their architecture was imperfect, both as a system of symmetry, and as a science founded upon truth and upon taste.

But when their labours are viewed as regards the practice of the art, their merits are presented under a far different aspect. Whether the magnitude, the utility, the varied combinations, or the novel and important evidences of their knowledge, be considered, the Romans, in their practical works, are yet unrivalled. They here created their own models, while they have remained examples to their successors. Though not the inventors of the arch, they, of all the nations of antiquity, first discovered and boldly applied its powers; nor is there one dignified principle in its use which they have not elicited. Rivers are spanned; the sea itself, as at Ancona, is thus enclosed within the cincture of masonry; nay, streams were heaved into air, and, borne aloft through entire provinces, poured into the capital their floods of freshness, and health. The self-balanced dome, extending a marble firmament over head, the proudest boast of modern skill, has yet its prototype and its superior in the Pantheon —

Relic of nobler days and noblest arts !  
Despoil'd, yet perfect, with thy circle spreads  
A holiness appealing to all hearts —  
To art a model.

The same stupendous and enduring character pervaded all the efforts of Roman art, even in those instances where more ancient principles only were brought into action. Where the Greeks were forced to call the operations of nature in aid of the weakness of art, availing themselves of some hollow mountain side for the erection of places of public resort, the imperial masters of Rome caused such mountains to be reared of masonry, within

their capital, for the Theatre, Amphitheatre, and Circus. Of these vast structures, where assembled multitudes might sit uncrowded, the Colosseum — the mightiest indeed, yet only one of the labours of the reign in which it was raised — contains more solid material, brought too from far, and exquisitely wrought, than all the works of either Louis XIV., or the Czar Peter — the two greatest builders among the sovereigns of modern times :

From its mass,  
Walls, palaces, half cities, have been rear'd ;  
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,  
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.

Palaces — Temples — Baths — Porticos — Arches of Triumph — Commemorative Pillars — Basilica, or Halls of Justice — Fora, or Squares — Bridges — without mentioning the astonishing highways, extending to the extremities of the empire — all were constructed on the same grand and magnificent plan. The art, in every part of its practice, partook of the national character of the people. Its applications were great, substantial, and useful — beautiful in execution, but this beauty dignified yet more as subservient to utility. The highest conceivable grandeur seemed but necessary, as commensurate with the wants and the durability of a dominion which was to be universal and eternal. Roman art has, in these respects, a character almost of moral dignity beyond all relics of antiquity. The records of their dead, though erections of more equivocal usefulness, partake of the same style, and, like the pyramids of Egyptian kings, have ceased to be monuments save of their own greatness. Some, and those but of individuals, or even a woman's grave, as towers of strength have rolled back the shock of feudal warfare ; and the tomb of an emperor, turned into a palace, or a fortress, still overawes the city of the Cæsars.



But, alas! the passing briefness of all things sublunary! The spirit's homage to this mightiness of mind and power, is due only to the labours of little more than a century and a half. The very greatness of these edifices proved a source of after corruption, by withdrawing attention from the delicacies of composition, and by substituting brute mass for the refinements of science. Even under the Antonines, decline from the age of Hadrian is perceptible — though more in taste than in practice. Under Commodus, architecture suffered most decided degradation — another proof how steadily the arts reflect, not only the mental, but the moral energies of the times. The downward impulse hurries onwards, occasionally stayed by the personal virtues or activities of the reigning prince. Severus has thus left evidence how far his age had fallen, and yet how superior to those that follow! between his triumphal arch and that of Titus, how great the difference! — yet, in point of design, far less than between his and Constantine's. The last splendours of Roman skill were elicited by the talents of Dioclesian, and great appear still to have been the practical resources of architecture — greater than usually admitted. The circular Hall in his Baths is inferior only to the Pantheon, and awakened the enthusiasm of Michael Angelo; his Dalmatian Palace was the finest building undertaken for twelve succeeding centuries. Few of the qualities which can ennoble the art, as an object of taste, survived this period. The works of Constantine, not excepting the founding of a capital, prove how complete was the lapse, since even his zeal could call forth only attempts to ungraceful and ineffective.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE history of Architecture still to be considered, extends through fifteen centuries to the present time. This interval may be divided into three eras. I. Period of the circular arch. II. Period of the pointed arch. III. Revival and practice of classic art. The theories so abounding in this particular portion of the subject, must be reviewed as in themselves forming part of the information which the reader has a right to expect; but the notice will be brief, the narrative, it is hoped, enabling the judgment to deduce its own conclusions from facts, independently of all opinion. For this reason, the preceding division is adopted, characterised only by the style of architecture, without reference to those minute distinctions and disputes about names, the great sources of obscurity and unsettled hypothesis in treating of the building of the middle ages. It may be remarked, *in limine*, that the term, 'Gothic Architecture,' is of late invention, and appears to be used in two distinct, or indeed opposite meanings. First, to denote the whole system of architectural erection intervening between the decline of the ancient classic modes, and their reappearance soon after the revival of letters. In this sense, it is usually employed as expressive of something barbarous and unscientific. In the second place, the phrase is employed by a large school of writers and artists, to denote a system or systems of art, arising, it is acknowledged, among men of rude cultivation in other respects, yet claiming original principles of invention, and very refined rules of practice — so far even as to be an imitation of natural prototypes of very distant, yet tasteful associations. Each of these theories exclusively

taken, seems to be disproved by the course of history, when all preconceived notions are laid aside, and when art, as ought ever to be the case, is fairly made its own interpreter.

I. It has been shown that the Romans, in obtaining full mastery of a powerful engine in building — the arch, were at first bold, subsequently lavish, and, it will appear, finally barbarous, in its application. From the reigns even of the early Cæsars, a tendency may be traced in their architecture to become great in mass, but little in parts — to lessen, in the first instance, the vertical or supporting members; and in the second, to load the superstructure, or supported parts. The progress of corruption might be traced, by regular steps, from vast arches, with groins planted on a single Corinthian column, to the arcades of the palace of Dioclesian at Spalatro. These still are left, exhibiting external and internal ranges of arches, springing directly from the capitals of the columns, without any intervening entablature. What more, we ask, is wanting here, to one of the most decided characteristics of one species, at least, of Gothic architecture, and an elemental principle in all kinds? nothing, save a little less elegance of workmanship in the supports, a pier substituted for the column, and the soffit of the arch bevelled instead of being square; steps successively apparent in posterior remains. Surely, then, it is carrying theory beyond all moderate limits, to contend for a separate origin of the system, when the principles of Gothic building are thus distinctly recognizable in a corruption of classic modes, at an era while yet vigorous practice prevailed, with resources undiminished for its support. This corruption, indeed, evidently proceeded, not so much from inefficiency, as from too eager pursuit of novelty — this too, unrestrained by the immediate

presence of more simple forms; for, in the baths of the same emperor, appears a less licentious taste. For the exterior, indeed, such Gothic arcades do not seem to have been soon imitated; but for the interior, their adoption was almost immediate. These intermediate steps it is unnecessary farther to pursue at present.

The era of Constantine, though justly regarded as marking the final disappearance of the last lingering rays of ancient taste, proves yet a most important epoch in the history of architecture. The reception of Christianity as the religion of the empire, not only changed to a very great extent, the entire frame and aspect of society, but in a particular manner influenced the practical art of building. As in the heathen temple was traced the great source of perfection in ancient art, so in the Christian church then established, is to be found the origin of those modes and forms, which, for so many centuries, guided modern practice. But the former structure was one of external magnificence only; internally, it was neither intended, nor, unaltered, adapted, to accommodate large assemblies. In the new religion, this became the primary object in its places of worship: while the early Christians refused to make use of the 'houses of idols.' In this emergency, there remained only one course—to convert the most capacious of unobjectionable buildings into churches. Of all these, the Basilicon presented, not only no difficulties as having been desecrated, but also was directly accommodated to the necessities of the case. The ancient Basilicon was a building of great extent, adjoining the forum or great square, in every city, serving at once the purposes of an exchange for the transaction of business, of a court for the administration of justice, and of a place for general resort. The exterior was adorned with porticoes more or less magnificent, while



internally it was separated lengthwise by two or four ranges of columns, into three or five longitudinal divisions, according to its width. Of these, the middle one was the largest, open to the top, and uncovered; the side ones were smaller, roofed in, with galleries opening into the centre compartment, and to which access was had by stairs at the two extremities. Under an arched niche, usually at the extremity of the central division, was a tribunal for the judge, exactly in the situation where the Christian altar was afterwards placed. From the whole description, it is evident, that the only alteration necessary to convert this edifice into a complete church, with its nave and lateral aisles, was to place a roof over the middle portion. Thus the first Christian churches were formed; and hence many of those in Rome still retain the name of Basilicon. Subsequently, the transepts were added, to imitate the cross, though this form seems to have been very early known in the East.

The general form of the church being thus determined, more through chance than design, yet with great convenience and propriety, this accidental form was adhered to in the subsequent erections for sacred purposes; but with certain internal arrangements, modified by the lessened resources of the art, the prevailing taste, and the novel exigencies of the case. Instead of the horizontal entablature resting upon the internal ranges of pillars, as in the more classical Basilicon, churches were constructed internally of arcades, the arches resting upon the capitals of the columns. These latter were torn from more ancient edifices, but combined, and often with considerable effect, by the ruder efforts of existing art. Thus, with columns for supports, united with ranges of semicircular arches abutting against the walls, we soon find the perfect Gothic church established.

This style of building, recommended at once by convenience and necessity, rapidly spread over the whole of Italy and the Empire, for Constantinople was erected from pilfered monuments, which, when taken to pieces and transported thither, were subsequently set up in a most confused and imperfect manner. When the supporting columns could no longer be obtained from ancient structures, or where this resource had never existed, the whole was to be reared from the foundation. Here it would soon be discovered that a cylindrical, square, or bevelled pier, without diminution, would be a fitter and more easily erected support for the arch. From the desire of stability, or the imperfection of skill, this pier, of whatever form, begins gradually to decrease in altitude, while it becomes more massive, still with a base and capital palpable though rude imitations of the same members of the classic column.

In this state was the art, when Italy fell under the power of barbarian conquerors. This style they adopted in their own buildings; for, after conquest was secure, they patronised the arts of their subjects, introducing a still greater profusion of ornament, rudely executed, and in worse design. Yet the whole effect of such works is often not without grandeur. Beginning with Rome, we might instance, from our own observation, a continuous series of monuments, of a style such as now described, still remaining in different parts of Italy, especially the Gothic capitals of Lombardy, as Ravenna, Verona, Pavia, introducing the early revival in Pisa and the cities of Tuscany. Such a survey would unite the labours of Metrodorus, the first Christian architect under Constantine, with those of Buschetto and Diotisalvi, in the commencement of the eleventh century, leading to the mention of various architects of the Gothic kingdom, as

Ciriades, of Rome; Aloisius, of Padua, author of the famous tomb of Theodoric, called the Rotunda of Ravenna; St Germain, of France; St Avitus, of Clermont; Agricola, of Chalons; Romnaldus, of France; Tietland, of Germany; with others. Such an inquiry, however, is not here necessary, inasmuch as it must now appear obvious, that the style just described might be termed Gothic, as practised by the mixed race of invaders, who, under the name of Goths, subdued Italy; but that such a style could not have been introduced by them from the forests of Germany and the wilds of Pannonia.

From Italy, religion, and consequently ecclesiastical building, extended over the rest of Europe. In France and Germany, the names enumerated above, with the works still remaining there, might be examined in corroboration of the fact, that the circular arch prevailed at the same time in these countries. But as of most importance, attention is better limited to British art in the middle age. This species of building is distinguished, in native antiquities, by the appellation of Saxon or Norman,—displaying, as characteristics, low, thick, and rotund pillars, with bases and capitals often fantastically carved, with heavy semicircular arches, springing directly from the top, corresponding exactly with the corrupted Roman. Regarding the propriety of this designation, however, doubts may reasonably be entertained, since it by no means certainly appears that either the Saxons or Normans were the introducers.

There is evidence that sacred edifices existed in Britain prior to the Saxon invasion; and, indeed, when Constantine wrote rescripts to the various provinces, his own birthplace would not be omitted among those enjoined to erect and repair churches. It would appear, also, that the Saxons were attached to wooden erections,

as is expressed by the verb *getymbrian*, to build,—a similar analogy, from the same cause, as in Greek, where the word *wood* is used to denote the constituent matter, or material, of anything—as ‘the wood,’ meaning the matter, of ‘an argument.’ It is probable, then, that the stone buildings of the Saxons were rather copied from existing edifices among the conquered people, consequently direct imitations of the parent corruptions of Italy. This last fact, the only one of real importance in the present case, is not left to conjecture; for, in the accounts of the earliest stone structures of the seventh century, it is said they were erected, in the original phrase, ‘more Romanorum,’ in the style of the Romans, that is, the style already described. Between the Saxon, or supposed Saxon, and Norman, there exists no difference, except in the superior magnificence of the latter—a circumstance accounted for by the progress of society.

It has thus been established, that the style of building with circular arches is clearly a corruption from the ancient classic forms. With little distinctive change, or characteristic difference, this mode was practised throughout Europe during nine centuries.

II. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, an innovation upon the long monotony of the circular arch begins to appear and to be perfected. This was the introduction of the pointed, or lancet Gothic, to which species the term is more strictly limited. The origin and progress of the pointed arch, has been rendered one of the most complicated problems in the history of architecture. The subjects of discussion here involve two questions—first, Whence and by whom this style was introduced? secondly, From what prototype the idea was originally derived?



On the former of these subjects, the various conflicting opinions may be arranged under two general heads: that the proper Gothic, or pointed arch, had its origin in the cathedral buildings of England, whence the knowledge and practice of this style was diffused throughout Europe during the thirteenth century; or that this architecture is of Oriental growth, and was brought into Europe by the Crusaders. The author of the first system we believe was Walpole; but it has since been adopted by Britton, and a large proportion of the English antiquaries. The second opinion has been ably maintained by Lord Aberdeen, and is that more generally adopted in other countries. It is not here possible to enter into the details of the controversy; the latter view certainly appears to be supported by the analogy both of history and of the arts. This, in absence of positive evidence, and with similar buildings of equal age and character in France, affords far more conclusive argument than any to be derived from the greater perfection which the style, comparatively speaking, displays in England, when the extent of the country and the number of fine buildings are considered. But individual edifices, especially in Germany, are not only equally ancient, but more splendid. Our pretensions to exclusive invention, under circumstances so notorious, that, in Italy, the Gothic is more frequently styled '*Tedesco*,' or '*German*,' have exposed the national information in matters of art, to the severe but merited animadversions of foreign writers. The assumption, however, appears to have little connexion with national opinion, having arisen among antiquaries whose almost sole study had been English building, or, at least, who had viewed the history of Architecture under this peculiar mode alone. In this respect, extensive research and elegant erudition enabled

Lord Aberdeen to bring to the subject every requisite of decision; and were we inclined to place faith in any exclusive theory of introduction, it would be that which his Lordship has so ably advocated, in maintaining the Eastern origin of the Gothic or pointed arch.

From what exemplar this form was conceived, or by what prototype suggested, has, in the second place, exercised speculation to a wide extent. The following are the principal opinions: 1. Theory of Warburton, — that natural groves supplied the primitive idea, the trunks, branches, and foliage of the trees being represented in the pillars, arches, and tracery of the Gothic. 2. The system of Sir James Hall, — that the whole style, in all its varieties, is but an imitation of wickerwork, — an opinion frequently, though very improperly, considered as a modification of the former: it is independent, and has been very ingeniously followed out in detail. 3. Theory of Sir Christopher Wren, remarkable at least in its propounder, — that the Free Masons were the inventors of the pointed arch. 4. Opinions of many German and Continental writers, — that this arch is but an imitation of the Egyptian and Indian pyramid. 5. Hypothesis, first incidentally proposed by Bentham, subsequently methodized and illustrated by Dr Milner, and pretty generally received, — that the intersection of semicircular arches forming intermediate pointed ones, gave the primitive model. This interlacing of arches is a common ornament in buildings of the old Gothic, already explained; it occurs frequently in relievo, and, if we recollect rightly, also with disengaged columns in several of the façades of old churches in Italy. Durham and Lincoln cathedrals, likewise ecclesiastical remains in Scotland, as Kelso Abbey, furnish examples. 6. Opinion of Mr Whittaker and others, — that pointed Architecture was

known to, and practised by, the Romans, early under the imperial government.

Such are the leading theories on this interesting subject; an examination of the facts would lead to a history of the ecclesiastical architecture of a great portion of Europe for upwards of three centuries. In France, the pointed arch was early introduced; but the light style of Gothic architecture was not generally carried to such perfection as in Germany and Flanders, having been sooner affected by the introduction of the Italian taste. The German style was perfected about the close of the fourteenth century, and subsequently appears to have undergone little variation, even to the middle of the sixteenth, thus retaining the elegance of the best age in the art much longer. Compared with our own, the best examples have much the same character, with lighter forms and richer tracery, — but of such examples there are fewer in proportion than with us. In Italy, the pointed arch never obtained. It is found, indeed, in Venice and Milan, and occasionally elsewhere; but the style to which it gave birth is not characteristic of Italy, where the early churches are of the old or circular, and the more modern of the mixed or Lombard style. In England, four general periods mark so many changes of Gothic.

1. From 1235 to 1272, including the reigns from the accession of Stephen to that of Edward I., termed *Early, English, Simple, and Lancet Gothic*, characterised by long narrow openings, with a very sharp high arch. Early part of the period shows the gradual introduction of the pointed style.

2. From 1272 to 1377, to the accession of Richard II. This has been designated the age of the *Pure Gothic*, or *Decorated English*, being more highly ornamented

than the former, but without exuberance; especially characterised by an arch which circumscribes an equilateral triangle, hence proposed to be named, *Triangular Gothic*.

3. From 1377 to 1509, terminating with the accession of Henry VIII. This constitutes the age of the *Florid Gothic*, which, between these dates, underwent a succession of changes; first, from aspiring, to flatly-pointed and obtuse arches, with large daylights, in panels and straight mullions, instead of tracery; hence the names *Obtuse* and *Perpendicular English*; becomes more and more ornamented; ceilings of the richest and most complicated tracery, with pendants; Henry VII.'s chapel fine specimen.

4. From 1509 to 1625; when the reign of Charles I. introduces Inigo Jones, and the revival of ancient architecture. First part of the reign of Henry the Eighth a continuation of the Florid Gothic; subsequently the designs of Holbein, and of the Italian artist employed by that monarch, entirely ruined the Gothic, introducing a most barbarous mixture of Roman, Italian, and Gothic. In the succeeding reigns, a stiff and most unmeaning style arose; and, in Scotland, we trace a near approach, if not in magnitude, at least in excellence, to the English examples of Gothic; while the fortunes of the art are found to assimilate to its history in Germany, in as far as a character of great perfection was early formed, and longer preserved, than in the south. It must appear a singular proof of hasty and inconclusive inquiry, that, while an English origin has been claimed for the pointed arch, its elements are found of a date more ancient in Scottish ecclesiastical buildings, not to mention those on the Continent.



In opposition to all the preceding theories, we consider the system of pointed architecture, or that properly denominated Gothic, to have arisen independently, though almost contemporaneously, among the nations of Europe most conspicuous for the cultivation of this peculiar style. In this we are borne out by a series of monuments in each country, showing the progressive rise and introduction of the pointed arch, from the form of two long stones, placed on supports, and meeting at top—a contrivance as still visible in the walls of Mycenæ, of three thousand years' standing, up to the finished lancet arch, as in Salisbury cathedral. Or, granting even the Eastern introduction of the arch—and here the monuments are of very doubtful antiquity,\*—what does this prove with regard to the origin of the system?—Absolutely nothing. This knowledge alone would not go further to enable the architect to construct a Gothic cathedral, than would one of the voussoirs in teaching him the properties of the arch itself. The system is one entire and independent whole, in which the pointed arch is merely an instrument subservient to principles, in consequence of which, if not invented, it was at least improved and rendered perfect. In this light the subject has too seldom been viewed: a light which places Gothic architecture in true and dignified position of an independent branch of art, governed by its own precepts of convenience, stability, and ornament.

When, in consequence of an extraordinary out-breaking of religious zeal and enthusiasm, an astonishing change was wrought in the frame of European society,

\* Since expressing our opinion, in an early part of the volume, on the doubtful antiquity of Indian architecture, we have perceived, with pleasure, that Bishop Heber's observations confirm the inference we had ventured to draw from the analogies of art.

one of the first impulses was to provide, in those countries hitherto comparatively ignorant of the arts, more suitable edifices for the services of that religion, in whose cause multitudes were shedding, or ready to shed, their blood in distant and unknown regions. Thus the Crusades were, but not as usually supposed, the cause of the introduction of art. They operated as one of those moral springs of action by which the arts, as the course of human life, are found to be directed.

Under such impressions, when the architect contemplated the ancient structures, the principle of convenience would at once suggest the necessity of heightening their low arches, and decreasing their enormous supports, by which light was obstructed, and space filled up. He saw, however, these efforts could not be accomplished on the old methods:—here the principle of stability—no abstract theory, but the knowledge of the practical builder—taught him, that by elevating the crown of the arch, and thus removing in part the lateral pressure, both objects would be accomplished; for while height was gained, the weight would be thrown more into the perpendicular, and consequently would remain firm with diminished support. The principle once introduced, was carried even to frightful boldness. But again, though the lateral pressure was removed from the arcade itself, abutment was still to be provided at the extremities and side-walls. Hence the peculiar characteristic of the buttress. This indeed existed in the old Gothic; but here the feature assumed a novel appearance. The arches being placed high, required additional altitude to be added, as a counterbalance, at the opposing point; thus the buttress was converted into a turret or pinnacle, susceptible of every varied form which it afterwards received, when the desire of ornament, without the guidance of taste, wandered

into every maze of fantasy. Thus the whole system depended upon principle — neither rising, like an exhalation, in consequence of imported knowledge, nor emulating some remote association or model, but by the slow and gradual process of experience.

The Gothic cathedral, thus contemplated in its native character and principles — established in unmoved security by the very agency of those forces which tend most directly to destruction, displays an evidence of science, perhaps, when the times are considered, the most wonderful in the whole history of intelligence. Never have the stereometric precepts of building — one of the most difficult branches of the art, been better exhibited than in these piles. Mass counteracts mass, — the very conflict of downward efforts upholds the reed-like column, and hangs on high the ponderous vault. Self-balanced, the entire system contains within itself the essence of its own existence in the chain of means and end, of minute contrivance, and of one purpose. Yet amid all this no effort is apparent, even while the mind starts at the power of its own ingenuity over the properties of matter, and the laws of nature — the artist seems to sport with his subject, to tempt the prostration of his airy fabrics. Here come into aid the principles of Gothic ornament, than which nothing pertaining to the style more merits admiration, whether as enabling the architect to extend the fantasy of his plans, or still more as essentially producing those effects which these plans contemplate. In no system of architecture, the Grecian not even excepted, do the ornamental, so completely integrate and harmonize with the necessary modes. Ornament could not here be removed without destruction both of beauty and stability; it strengthens, yet conceals the necessity of support; and, like the garniture of herbage, and flower, and twining

plant, upon the rugged face of earth, it spreads to the delighted eye its mazy error, where would else be only a frightful and unformed mass of nodding masonry.

Such are the merits of Gothic architecture, examined in itself, and in reference to the times which gave it birth. Apart from these considerations, viewed as the object of refined perception or cultivated taste, the entire system is defective. In architecture, pleasurable emotion arises from a two-fold cause — the modes, and the associations of the art. In regard to the former, it may be laid down as an universal precept of taste, that in architecture, of all the arts, according to the exhibition of principle, and to the facility with which the mind conceives design, and traces intention, will be the mental pleasure produced by the work. This constitutes the very essence of exalted feeling in Greek art, which, grounded upon obvious principle, consonant with natural appearances, and pursuing beauty as a final aim, fills the mind with delight and admiration. In Gothic architecture, all this is reversed: its first principle is, to conceal all principle; to dazzle and to surprise by effects seemingly at variance with all the usual harmonies of things. Hence, on entering a Gothic edifice, though the mind, at first, be strongly affected by the magnitude and daring arrangement of the forms, where

—— the tall pile,  
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,  
Bearing aloft the arch'd and pond'rous roof,  
By its own weight stands steadfast and immoveable;

yet neither the judgment nor the fancy experiences those continually increasing emotions of delight which a Grecian building inspires. Again, the associations connected with Gothic structures are temporary, and, in great measure, local. They are dependent on our assurance of an-



tiquity. Remove from such their antique reminiscences, and venerable traditions, and they are despoiled of all, or good part, of their power over the imagination. With religious Gothic, our associations are more congenial; the holiness of the sentiment mingles its permanency even with the abstract forms; we love the very semblance of the place,

Where, through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise!

But there can be no doubt that this effect is accidental, not intrinsic; for decidedly the most impressive interiors in Europe are those in churches on classic models. To such style we are, indeed, not accustomed; yet certain it is, the first Christian hymn, when Christianity had now obtained a temple, rose to heaven from amid the beauteous majesty of the Grecian orders. Sublime associations, how much more in unison with the simple grandeur of the reformed service, than the austerity and superstitious gloom of Gothic erection!

As a system, then, adapted to its own age — as possessing independent, if not dignified, principles, we consider the pure Gothic, as now described, as one of the most singular and ingenious modes of architectonic science. But in its revived and modern application no useful purpose can be served, whether of good taste or legitimate effect.

III. Having thus considered, at some length, the only original and distinguishing characteristics of the architecture of the middle age; the revival of classic forms, as already described, and therefore offering little of novelty, seems to require here only brief notice. Indeed, to render a detailed account interesting, would introduce discussions too lengthened for our limits, on the present state of the art in the different countries of Europe.

So early as the commencement of the eleventh century, the Italians began to depart from the ungraceful style of the first period ; a departure which, if not a renovation, was at least an improvement, in some measure founded upon closer conceptions of ancient art, and with the Roman orders, though improperly applied. This style, heavy, highly decorated, but not unimpressive, continued to the close of the fourteenth century, and has been named the Italian. Its principal masters were the sculptors already mentioned as belonging to the period. With the commencement of the fifteenth century, a new and far higher school arose, which, though far from pure, was yet much improved ; and would have been still more so, had not its patrons been chiefly painters, too ready to aspire to the bold and peculiar effects of their own art. Bramante, the first architect of St Peter's, Da Vinci, Raphael, Julio Romano, and, above all, Michael Angelo, were the masters of this era. The last mentioned mighty name, here, as in all the arts, created his own style : robust, even to the abuse of strength ; incorrect, and sometimes barbarous, in detail ; in general effect, always grand and original. In St Peter's, with many defects, and still greater beauties, he has left a monument of his genius, the most glorious structure that now adorns the face of the earth, unequalled in extent as in science.

Yes, thou, of temples old or altars new,  
 Standest alone, with nothing like to thee —  
 Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.  
 Since Zion's desolation, when that He  
 Forsook his former city, what could be  
 Of earthly structures, in his honor piled,  
 Of a sublimer aspect ? Majesty,  
 Power, glory, strength, and beauty, there are aisled.

Great as was this school, much was yet wanting to retrieve the golden purity of ancient art ; and this, in the

succeeding century, was added by Palladio, so far at least, as the severe majesty of the primitive modes could be recovered from a Roman writer, and by the study of Roman exemplars. Palladio is refined, rather than nervous, — elegant, rather than grand; but of all the modern masters, he is the most chaste in design and ornament, prior to more recent knowledge of the fountain of all excellence — the remains of Greece. His school was numerous, at least the masters who followed out his principles; which, spreading over Europe, firmly established the Roman style, banishing a bastard species of Roman Gothic, by which both systems had been disgraced, and their characteristic distinctions confounded. Of the Palladian, or reformed school, Bernini was the last disciple of genius; his circular colonnade, in front of St Peter's, is worthy of its site. With him, and the conceits of Borromini, Italian architecture may almost be said to have ceased. In France, the two Mansards, during the building reign of Louis XIV., have left heavy imitations of the Michael-Angelesque style; still, to the artist writers of that country, the art owes much. It is there more regularly studied than in any other country in Europe; and in one specimen, the façade of the Louvre, the grandest excellence has been attained; but the general character of national building is too fluttering, wanting repose and majesty. From the two schools, the following ten have been selected, under the name of the modern masters, because, in their writings or buildings, the best precepts are obtained. Ranging the names in order of merit, we have Palladio, Scamozzi, Vignola, Alberti, De Lorme, Serlio, Viola, Cataneo, Boullant, Barbaro.

The graces of the Palladian school were caught by the congenial spirit of Inigo Jones, in whose labours the English school of classical architecture took its rise, and,

we might almost say, received its completion. Whitehall and Greenwich will rank among the finest architecture of Europe — evidences at once of the skill of the artist, and the taste of Charles I. Sir Christopher Wren, in the succeeding reign, with the same chaste design, brought to the profession more general science than his predecessor. His opportunities, from the consequences of the great fire, were greater than perhaps have fallen to the lot of any other modern; and, in the erection of the Metropolitan Cathedral, he proved the capabilities of his genius to be equal to his good fortune. He has reared the second, and barely second, edifice in the world. The art has nothing finer than the western front — so rich, so noble, and, notwithstanding the double arcade, so pure. On the whole, the exterior of St Paul's is to be preferred, both for effect and design, to St Peter's. Not so the interior. The Roman Basilicon opens upon the view with a calm, majestic, expansive capaciousness; the English cathedral is broken into parts, and scattered in its entirety.

Jones and Wren have remained the great masters of the English school: though Vanbrugh hardly deserved Swift's satire —

Lie heavy on him, earth, for he  
Laid many a heavy load on thee;

while the Earl of Burlington, in spite of Pope, did understand building. Gibbs, Kent, Hawksmore, left no successors; and during the reign of George II., English architecture was at its lowest. His late majesty is reported to have understood, and certainly had a taste for, the science; but his majesty was scarcely happy in the artist whom he patronized, Chambers, the architect of Somerset-house, and whose character may be thus summed up: — he introduced the Chinese style, and denied that



the Parthenon ever existed, or that, if it did, it must have been a clumsy piece of business. It is unnecessary to pursue the subject. For the mixed Roman — the modern Gothic — and Oriental styles, which have since prevailed, we can find no place among the modes of art.

The most recent improvements in the British metropolis are in better taste than those immediately preceding ; but in following the varied forms of buildings among the Romans, rather than the simpler outline of the Greeks, though no error has been committed, but perhaps the contrary, sufficient care has not been employed to place these varied masses advantageously, both as respects their own grandeur, and their decorative effect in street architecture.

A more promising aspect, also, of things, invites attention to the Northern capital. This singularly romantic and beautiful city, combining the associations of centuries with our admiration of the living age, and exhibiting in its buildings the rudest and the most refined exemplars, constitutes a feature in the history of our national architecture, and, among the cities of Europe, an isolated instance of undecided mastery between art and nature. The earlier of the new buildings of the Scottish metropolis, are, generally speaking, in the Palladian, or Roman style, with the exception of the college. Adams, in the last, has left a most splendid proof of genius. Viewed, as it ought to be, in itself, within the quadrangle, it fills the eye with a burst of splendid magnificence, equal to any effect we have ever experienced in modern building. Recent structures are in the true Grecian modes, transcripts from the Theseum and the Parthenon. We rejoice in this ; it is the only source whence renewed vigor can be derived to our fallen art — for fallen it is at present among us ; nor do we perceive, in the British empire,

such decided marks, not of reviving, but of vigorous taste, as in the Scottish school of architecture. The National Monument on the Calton, emulates, in gigantic mass, the Athenian structures themselves; while in the new High School is presented a perfect gem of art—where the purest Greek modes are combined and adapted with the happiest originality. The laborious and useful investigations which have rendered our artists so well acquainted with even the minutest details of the Greek forms, cannot remain without fruit—provided architects will be true to the best interests of their profession. Let it ever be borne in mind, that, magnificent as are the specimens of Roman skill, we desert the parent source when for these we forsake the remains of Grecian genius and art.

On reviewing these pages, it scarcely appears, that incidents or principles of importance have been overlooked, without such notice as limits permitted. In treating of the Fine Arts, indeed, the subject of patronage may seem to demand more separate consideration than is bestowed in occasional remarks. Brief, however, as these are, they will be found to contain, on this question, the impartial decisions of history, which uniformly declares the only wise, wholesome, and inspiring patronage to consist in national sympathy and national regard for the objects, purposes, and professors of Art. Here the countenance and protection of government are necessarily included, as affording the most distinguished assurance of the existence of this feeling, and as giving direction to the national efforts. In Britain, the genius of our institutions, and the character of the people require, while they will add power to, the effects of this union. These institutions are more national—the opulence and intelligence of the subject, abler to strengthen the hands and

to aid the designs of government, than in any other empire that ever existed. Our Fine Arts have hitherto been the only constituent of our national glory to which the cheering influence of this united sympathy has been denied.

THE END.















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